Saturday Review

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Tom Wolfe on Tom Wolfe:
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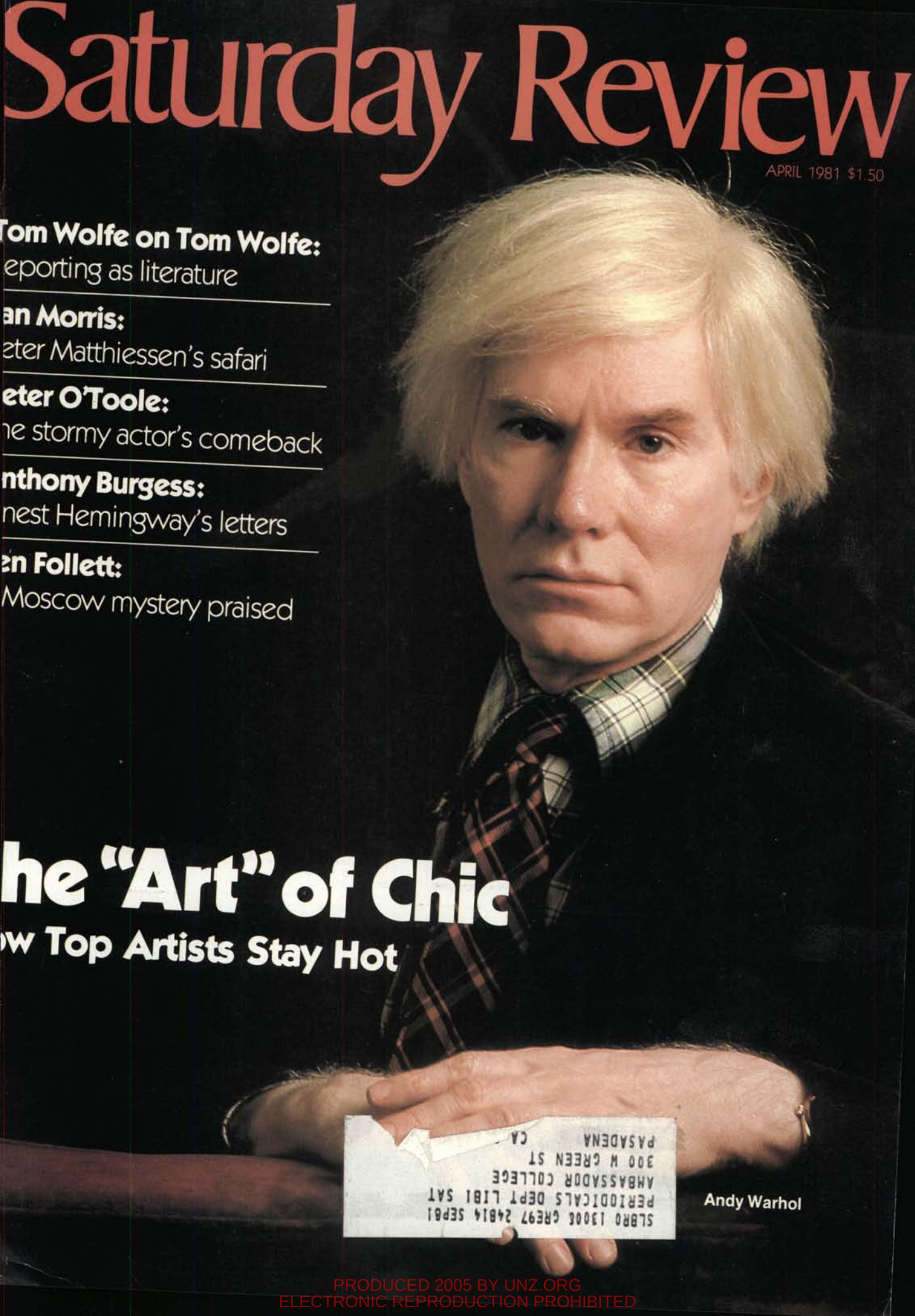

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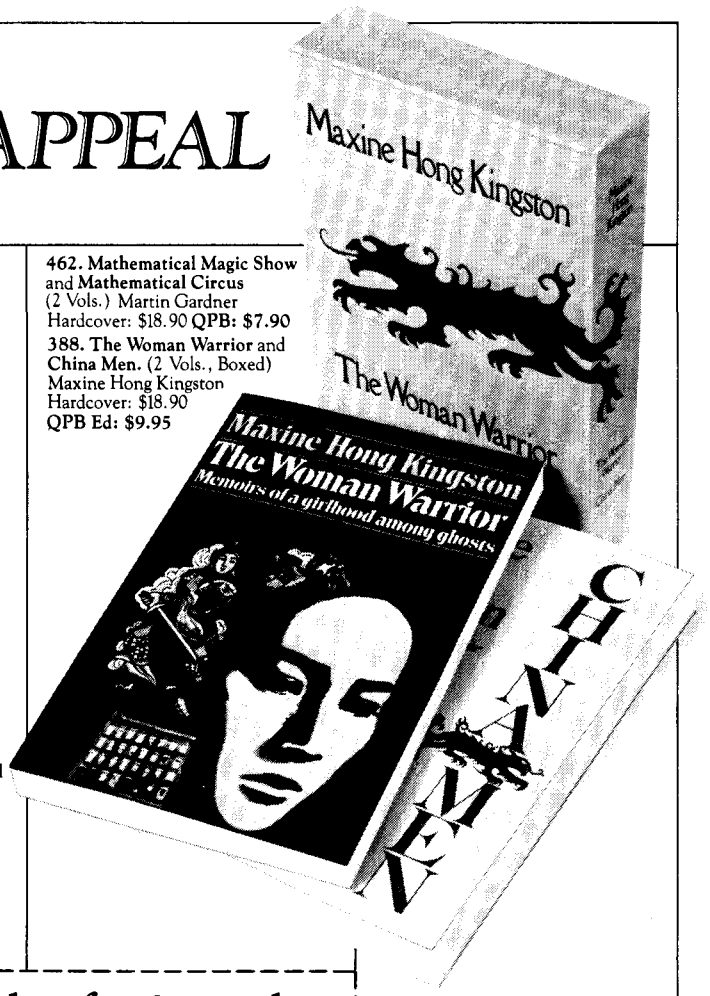

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TOWARD RIGHT CONCLUSIONS

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—Judge Learned Hand

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Saturday Review® APRIL 1981

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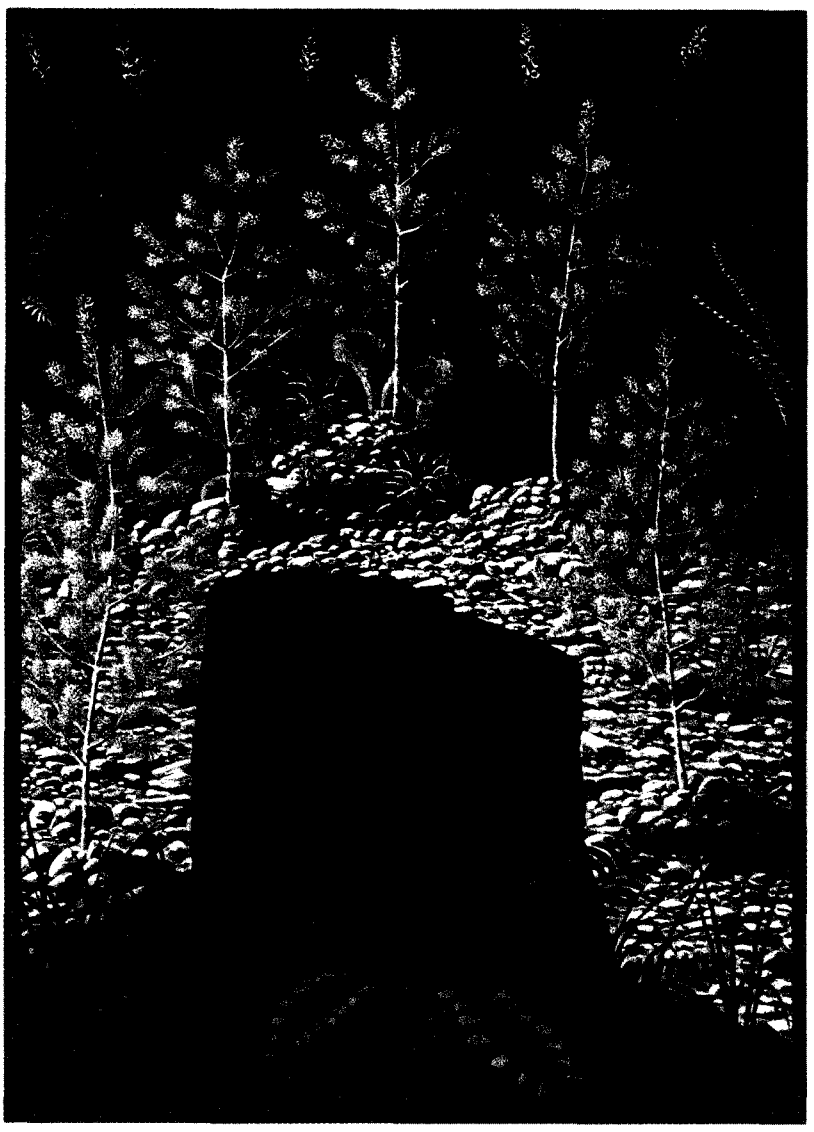

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That's why we increasingly use what once was wasted, either to make products like yeast, chunk bark and particleboard, or to generate energy.

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Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority

I began Ben Stein's article ["Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority," February] with the assumption that it was what its title suggested—an examination of two opposed positions on what television ought to be. I was therefore surprised to discover that the article ends up as a platform for Stein's sweeping personal biases about the medium itself. There is an amazing characterization of television as "unwatchably boring." Aside from the fact that the year 1980 saw the highest levels of set usage in the medium's history, if this were true, one has to ask what all the fuss is about. Or how it is that television is not only the nation's largest, but its most trusted source of news. I suppose all this is the logical result of having as referee a man who clearly detests the game he is covering.

David C. Fuchs
Vice-President, Communications
CBS/Broadcast Group
New York, New York

Despite television's shortcomings, it is today a much brighter wasteland than when it was left up to Beaver and Howdy-Doody for our wholesome enlightenment. But now, holy-rolling across the country, comes the "Reformation." Alas! Just when television is growing up and America is emerging from the dark ages of Victorian sexuality, the Moral Majority gathers the godly gumption to tell us—Jews, Muslims, atheists, and Christians—just what ungodly sinners we are. Lear has shown more moral responsibility in dealing with sensitive adult issues than Falwell contains in his pious pinky. If Falwell should ever control the media, God help us all!

Geoff Johnson
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Thank you for Ben Stein's article "Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority." Upon finishing the article, I immediately sent a check for $25 to Moral Majority begging them to keep up the good work.

Theodore R. Walter
Canton, Pennsylvania

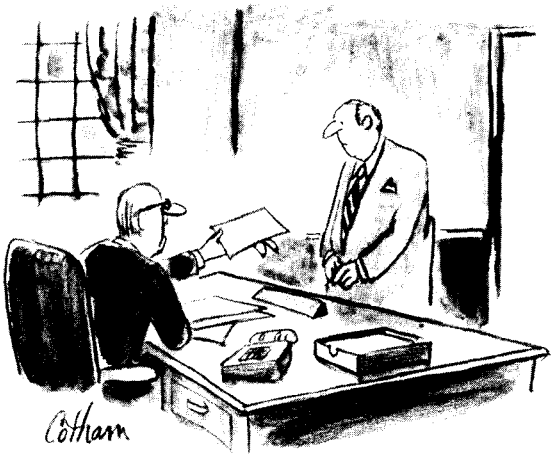
I've always thought Norman Lear was pretty far out, but I never realized he was so tuned in.

Harbert Ranch
Granby, Colorado

If the "moral majority" of Americans is so opposed to the current TV fare, who *is* it out there making *Dallas* and *Soap* top-rated programs? Jerry Falwell's is simply a highly organized special-interest group—not a majority—which, having told me whom I should vote for, now wants to tell me what TV shows to watch. What, in God's name, will be next?

Scout Parsons
Newfane, Vermont

How can Mr. Lear be so arrogant and smug as to believe everyone accepts the



"An interesting resumé, Randolph. If you'll read it you'll notice that I fired you from this company in 1972 when your memory began to fail!"

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LETTERS

trash parading back and forth on the TV screen? Jerry Falwell's reaction, along with others who constitute the Moral Majority, seems to me to be perfectly normal and expected in the face of an all-out assault on the values long held to be Christian as well as moral. If Norman Lear and his types hadn't started this trend, there would be no need for Jerry Falwell or the Moral Majority. However, if it comes to push and shove, let's all hope Falwell wins.

Arla J. Tracz
Falls Church, Virginia

I was most impressed by your article "Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority." I've long been opposed to Falwell and those like him. Not only are they dangerous megalomaniacs, but they are ignorant of the gift of individual thought. I don't believe that those who call themselves the Moral Majority know what it is to think for themselves. After all, it is easier to do what you are told and follow the crowd.

Their claims regarding "anti-Christian" attitudes are another source of irritation. What about those who are *not* Christians? Or, better yet, what about those who don't believe in religion at all? I always thought that they had rights too. According to the Moral Majority, they don't.

J. Bowdish
Norwalk, California

To Edward Albee's Defense

With mounting disbelief I read Roger Copeland's article, "Should Edward Albee Call It Quits" [February]. Since when has box-office popularity been any criterion of merit? He summarily dismisses two of Albee's best plays, *All Over* and *Seascape*, simply because they did not have long runs. He omits from the discussion altogether two even better plays, *A Delicate Balance* and *Tiny Alice*, which may well be Albee's greatest play.

If we are to use Mr. Copeland's ideas of merit, then we must throw out such classics as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, to mention only two books that failed miserably on first publication

Robert A. Wilson
New York, New York

Roger Copeland replies: Apparently "the mounting disbelief" that Mr. Wilson experienced while reading my article prevented him from reading it clearly. At no point do I suggest that box-offce popularity is a criterion of artistic merit. My reasons for "summarily dismissing" *All Over* and *Seascape* have nothing to do with their performance at the box office, but centered rather on their stiff language, mannered style, and intellectual pretensions.

As for Mr. Wilson's complaint that I omit altogether from my discussion any mention of either *A Delicate Balance* or *Tiny Alice*, I would again advise that he reread the article. Not only do I refer to both these plays, I go so far as to suggest that the title *A Delicate Balance* ironically calls attention to the problem at the heart of Albee's recent work: the difficulty of maintaining a delicate balance between emotional immediacy and metaphysical reflection.

So Mr. Copeland and Mr. Roth would have Edward Albee reveal to the world, once and for all, that he has really been writing about homosexuals all these many years. That was also the desire of a good many of my freshman composition students who had no patience with the absurd. Can't we get rid of these sophomoric Freudians? No wonder J.D. Salinger went into reclusion. Albee might do well to follow suit... but then, there would be rumors.

Michael C. Smith
Los Angeles, California

Fuller's Fans

Shame on Hugh Kenner for stabbing Bucky in the back and worse for your suggestive cover line: "Are His Visions Follies?" ["Fuller's Follies," February]. Nobody is perfect, nor his works, but the heritage that Bucky Fuller will leave behind in the form of his tangible domes, maps, and Dymaxion ideas more than offsets any fault one may find with his writings. He has sparked a whole generation of young people to "do more with less," and the consequent savings in energy, resources, food, and you-name-it will be a legacy far and away more than any current living American will leave behind. Besides, how can visions indeed be follies; they are only untried proposals, and as such cannot be follies unless proved to have failed.

Franklin R. Stern
Providence, Rhode Island

A Reader Responds

I enjoyed John Fludas's review of *The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer* [Book Briefs, February]. But in the second sentence he says, "As a Southern writer she has been compared to Katherine Mansfield, Flannery O'Connor and Eudora Welty. . . ." Doesn't he really mean Katherine Ann Porter? Katherine Mansfield, born in New Zealand, was British, not Southern.

Eileen H. Salisbury
Newhall, California

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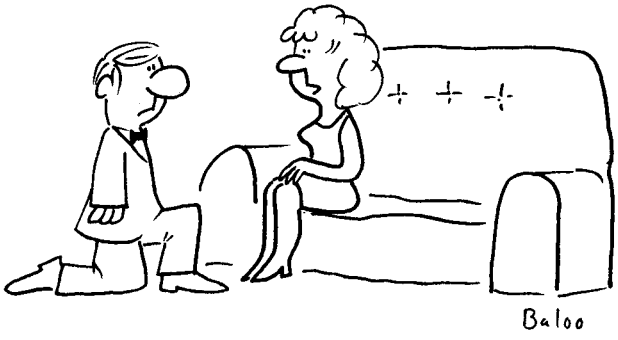

"I'm afraid I could never marry you, Charles, but have a nice day."

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By Alvin Tresselt, Dean of Faculty

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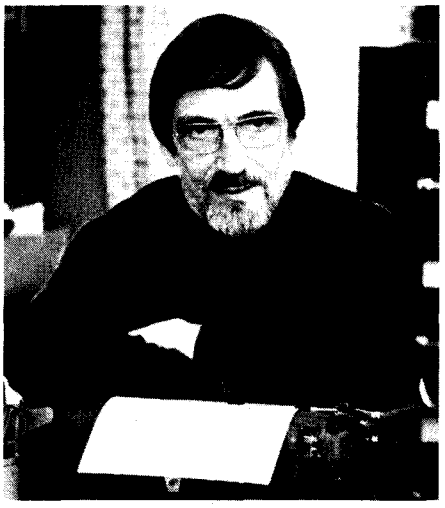

Alvin Tresselt was Vice President and Executive Editor of Parents' Magazine Press, the first editor of *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine for Children*, and a board member of the Author's Guild. His 53 books for young readers have sold over two million copies.

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I've learned a lot about writing for children and I love it. Now I'm passing my knowledge on to my students so they can profit from it. When I'm not writing my own books I spend my time at The Institute of Children's Literature, a workshop for writers that does only one thing and does it better than any other educational institution I know of: It trains qualified people to write for the young reader.

This is the way I work with my students, and my fellow instructors — all of whom are experienced writers or editors — work more or less the same way.

When you're ready — at your own time and your own pace — you send your assignment to me and I read it and reread it to get everything out of it you've put into it. Then I edit your assignment with a red pencil just the way a publishing house editor would — if he had the time. I return it along with a detailed letter explaining my comments. I tell you what your strong points are, what your weaknesses are, and just what you can do to improve. It's a matter of push and pull. You push and I pull and between us both, you learn to write.

The proof of the pudding

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"My first sale, to *National Catholic Weekly*, was a Course lesson. Then I sent another Course assignment to a writer's competition and won first prize of $400!"

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Marilyn Day of Marissa, Ill. says, "I'm proud of this accomplishment. Now I'm no longer a housewife, I am a *writer!*"

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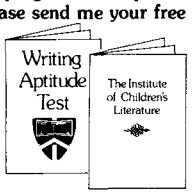

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APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

COURTESY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Guggenheim's retrospective of Arshile Gorky's work includes "Agony" (1947).

Art

"I do not paint in front of, but from within nature," said the Armenian-born Vosdanik Adoian, a.k.a. **Arshile Gorky** (1904-1948), who will receive the most comprehensive exhibition yet of his work in a retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, New York City. Forced to flee marauding Turks as a child, later immigrating to Watertown, Massachusetts, where he was fired from his job at the Hood Rubber Company for drawing on the packing crates, Gorky went on to become one of the leading figures during the Forties in the creation of a new and dominant American art. His truly original art—variously described as the last expression of Surrealism and the first of Abstract Expressionism—is all the more remarkable for the long, self-imposed apprenticeship he spent imitating the modern masters—most notably Cézanne, whom he considered the greatest of the moderns. The brief flowering of his mature genius, which emerged only a few years before his suicide, will be seen in the context of his slow, sure, artistic growth. (April 24 through July 19.)

Film

Federico Fellini's sexual phantasmagoria **City of Women** will burst upon American screens this month. Marcello Mastroianni plays Snaporaz, a battle-scarred soldier in the war of the sexes who, in pursuit of an elusive beauty, stumbles upon a convention of angry feminists. There, some practice karate, while one sixtyish woman with seven husbands expounds upon the joys of polygamy. Spotted lurking in the corner, Snaporaz is set upon. He escapes only to have his life imperiled by a carload of teenaged punk rockers; and is eventually rescued by the aging, rifle-toting Dr. Zaübercock (Ettore Manni), who announces a party that night to celebrate his 10,000th romantic conquest.

City of Women is sure to enrage feminists. But as always Fellini is, without apologies, Fellini. "Going to the cinema," he says, "is like returning to the womb." Of women he declares, "They represent myth, mystery, diversity, fascination, the thirst for knowledge and the search for one's own identity. Women are everything." (Opening in New York April 8.)

Marcello Mastroianni in Fellini's *City of Women*.

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Dancers Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey (foreground); Ruth St. Denis (rear).

Dance

The vanishing roots of modern dance will return to life this month at the State University of New York at Purchase. **The Early Years: American Modern Dance From 1900 Through the 1930s** will bring together the surviving movers and shakers of that era in a four-day festival-celebration to teach, speak, hold workshops, and give performances. Present will be such originators of the movement as Maria-Theresa Duncan, now 85 and the last of the "Isadorables," who will teach Duncan dances; Barton Mumaw, who will perform Ted Shawn solos; choreographer Hanya Holm; dancers from the original Doris Humphrey/Charles Weidman companies; and original Martha Graham dancers, including Martha Hill, Bessie Schoenberg and Gertrude Shurr. The dances of Helen Tamiris will also be seen.

The Joyce Trisler Danscompany and the Marion Rice Dance Company will recreate Denishawn works; Annabelle Gamson will perform Duncan solos, and Peggy Lyman will dance two works from the Graham repertoire. Commenting on the performances will be such critics and scholars as Deborah Jowitt, Tobi Tobias, and (*pièce de rêsistance*) our very own Walter Terry. (April 9 through 12.)

Theater

It's a lead-pipe cinch that the theatrical press will sound its noisiest salvos this month over Woody Allen's new play at Lincoln Center. But an equally rare and possibly significant event will take place at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where Samuel Beckett's new play, **Rockaby**, will be having its world premiere. Billie Whitelaw plays *Rockaby*'s only character, a woman in her declining years trying to recapture her past; at times the monologue becomes a dialogue with the character's own recorded voice from many years earlier. *Rockaby* lasts less than half an hour, and actress Whitelaw will round out the evening with a dramatic reading of Beckett's short story, "Enough." The production, commissioned by SUNY-Buffalo, is directed by Alan Schneider. After Buffalo, *Rockaby* will travel to the 1981 Autumn Festival at the Pompidou Center in Paris. (In Buffalo, April 8 through 11.)

Samuel Beckett's latest play premieres in Buffalo.

Opera

Two noteworthy debuts are imminent in the New York City Opera's new production of Leoš Janáček's **The Cunning Little Vixen**: Maurice Sendak, famed illustrator and children's author, has designed the sets and costumes (he also created the engaging costumes and scenery for the Houston Grand Opera's production of *The Magic Flute*. See "The Event," page 35); and Michael Tilson Thomas will conduct. An anthropomorphic folk-like tale, the plot concerns the crisscrossing paths of a forester and a fox. Gianna Rolandi will sing the vixen Sharp-Ears; Nadia Pelle, the fox Golden Stripe; and Richard Cross, the forester. Frank Corsaro, who staged the NYCO's production of Janáček's *The Makropoulos Affair*, will direct. For a review of Janáček's recorded operas, see page 90. (*Vixen* premieres April 9.)

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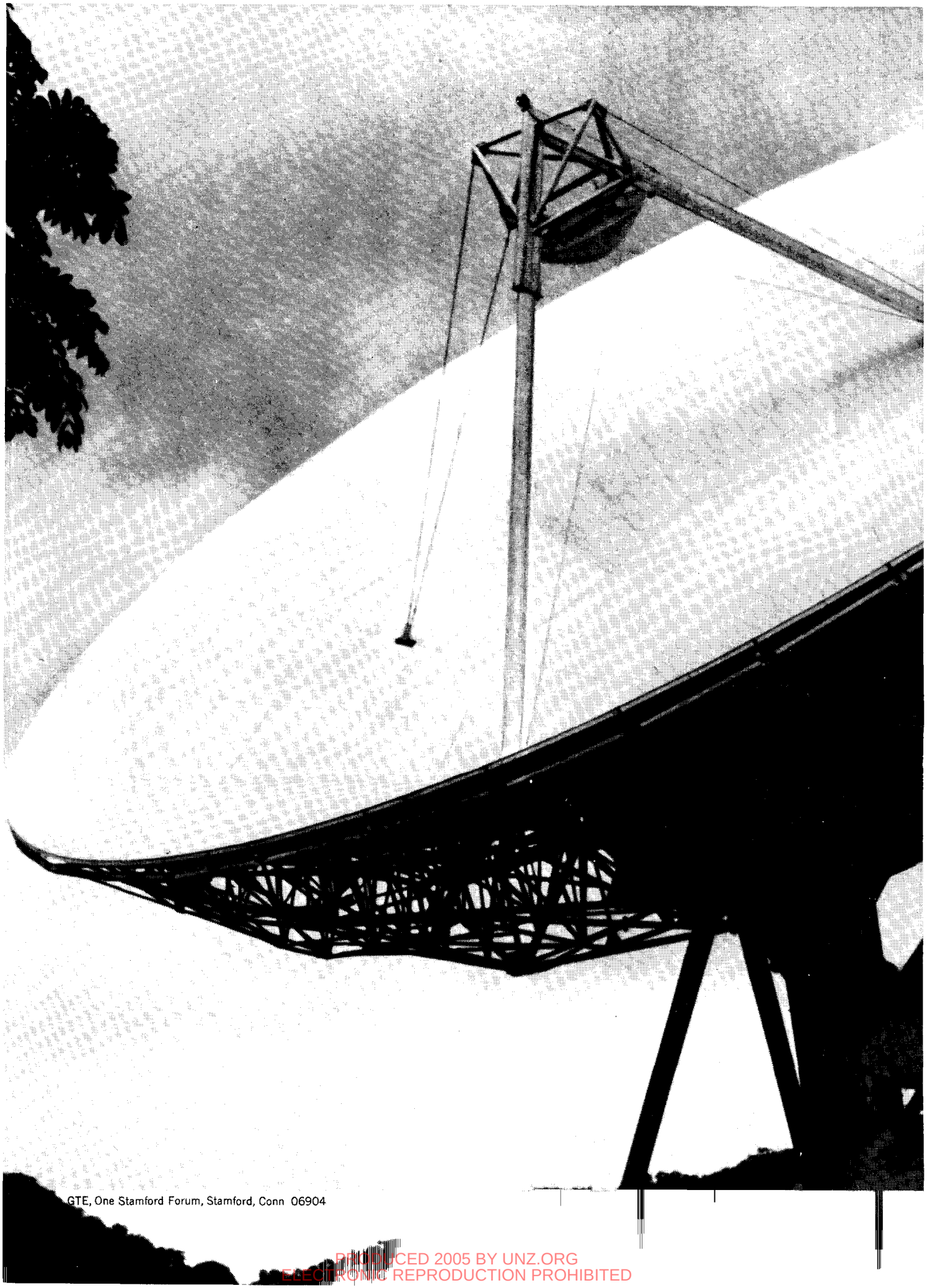

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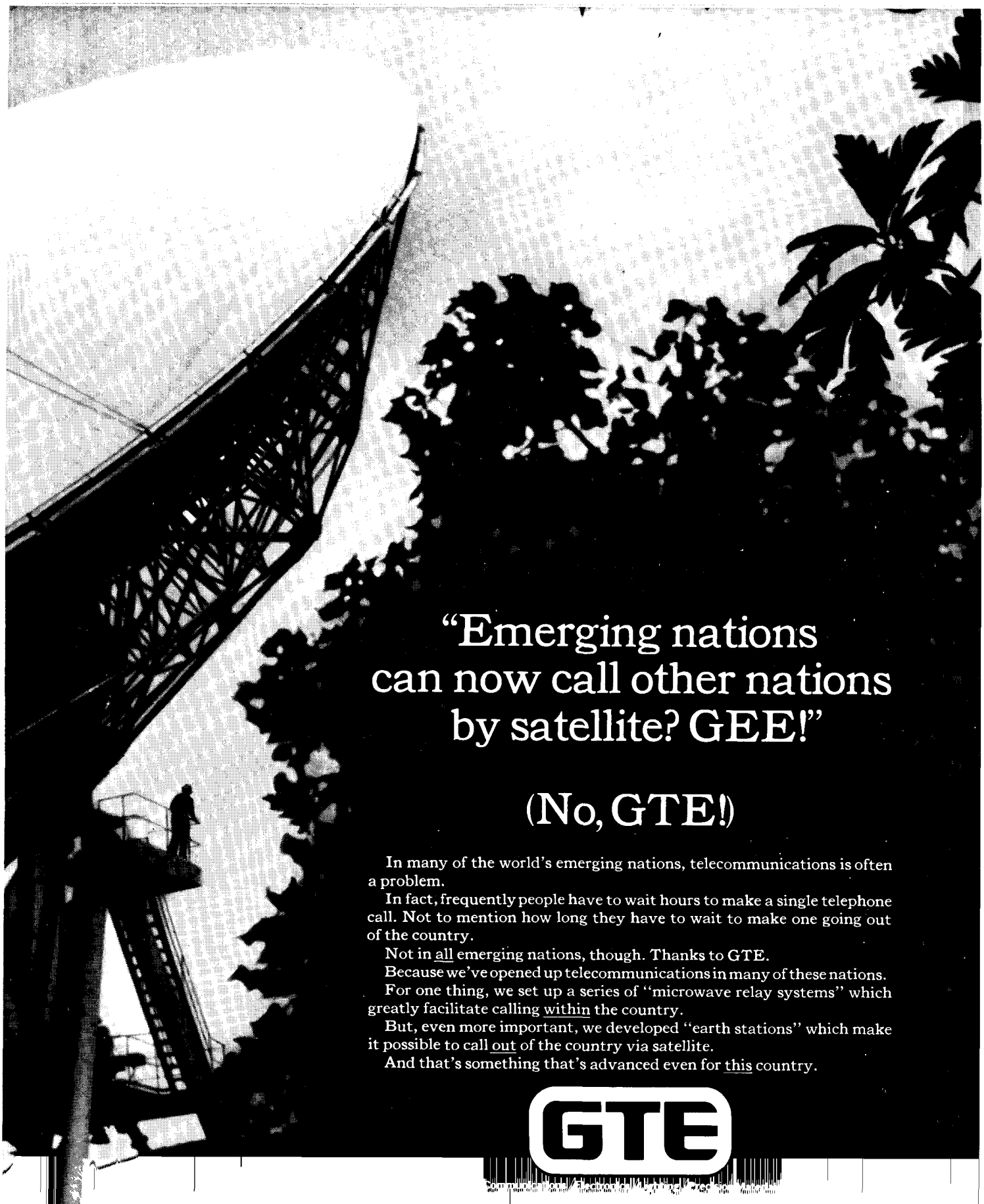

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The "Art" of Chic

by Carter Ratcliff

The scene is the dining room of Andy Warhol's Factory, with its turn-of-the-century paneling and its view of raffish, hustler-ridden Union Square in New York City. There is a moose head on the wall and a senator at the dining table—Senator Cranston of California, to be precise. He would like Andy to design an edition of prints, the proceeds from which would be a great help in the 1982 campaign. Sure, says Warhol, no less amiable and low-keyed than the senator himself, and perhaps even more confident of his place in the scheme of things.

What, asks the senator's young finance chairman, will Andy put on the benefit print? The old Warhol vagueness surfaces. Maybe some symbol. Not a face. Faces on political posters have definitely been done. Of course, says Bob Colacello, the right-hand man who runs *Andy Warhol's Interview* magazine; this will, strictly speaking, be a limited edition of *prints*, complete with Warhol's signature. This will not be a run of posters. Right, nods the finance chairman. The number of images that goes out of the Factory every year has to be kept under strict control, says Colacello.

Right.

Ever since the time of the Medicis, art and money have had a magnetic effect on each other. This is no secret, though Warhol is almost alone among his contemporaries in speaking of it openly. In his most recent book, *POPism*, Andy praises Emile de Antonio, an artists' agent in the Fifties, who went on to become a documentary filmmaker. According to Warhol, "De" was the first "to see commercial art as real art and real art as commercial art, and he made the whole New York art world see it that way."

Ambitious collectors still crave "revolutionary" painting and sculpture, but prices throughout the market have risen so steeply that collectors clamor for works by artists whose prices are likely to stay high. The recent million-dollar sale of Jasper Johns's "Three Flags" to the Whitney Museum is only the tip of the inflationary iceberg. An artist with any critical repute these days routinely asks at least five figures for a single work.

The art of one's own time is a dicey investment, at best. Some purchases turn out to be jackpots—"Three Flags" originally sold in 1959 for $915 (including delivery)—but most don't. The majority of new paintings that sold for around $1,000 in 1959 would be difficult to give away now. Like many of the top players on Wall Street, art buyers want to minimize risk (and more and more of the market is made up of corporate buyers who aren't overly confident in matters of aesthetic judgment). Art investors are interested in "blue-chip" items, the value of which can be relied upon not to collapse with changing tastes. And by chance or design, the careers of blue-chip revolutionaries—artists such as Warhol, Johns, Stella—have conformed to the market's hopes.

All these artists came into the spotlight with the discovery of a new, ground-breaking, eminently salable style—as shown in the chart on the following page. Before their moment of entry, these artists hardly ranked as faces in the crowd. Floundering, they experimented with a variety of styles before hitting it Right. And Big. Jasper Johns made precious, European-flavored collages before he came up with his first major works, including the *Flags* and the *Targets*. Roy Lichtenstein's Pop paintings were preceded by three years' worth of Abstract Expressionist canvases that seem to have disappeared off the face of the earth. Before he became a major Minimalist, Robert Morris was a minor follower of Jasper Johns.

With recognition comes an extreme reluctance to deviate in any significant measure from the style that first brought fame and fortune. In this respect, today's blue-chip revolutionaries differ from their modernist predecessors—artists such as Picasso, Kandinsky, Max Ernst, arguably Pollock and de Kooning—who altered their styles, sometimes radically, after winning critical acceptance.

Basic themes are updated for each new exhibition, much as General Motors comes out with a new look every year. Frank Stella's shaped canvases went from stark to baroque in the course of the Sixties. Then, in the next decade, his paintings began to reach out from the wall, until now they are more like relief sculptures than paintings. Warhol's changes show mostly in subject matter—from Marilyn to Mao to his recent society portraits. Carl Andrē spent the Seventies moving his metal plates out of their square formations into triangles, L-shapes, and so on. And occasionally he substitutes boulders and wooden columns for metal plates.

More than financial pressure keeps these artists in line. Arrival on the blue-chip list is invariably accompanied by a critical chorus—gallery owners, critics, collectors—proclaiming their favorite son's "historical inevitability." According to the conventional wisdom, the whole history of European painting since Raphael has been aiming toward—indeed has found its culmination in—Johns, Stella, Rauschenberg.

Andy Warhol, blue-chip revolutionary *in excelsis*, in his distinctive dining room.

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The Blue-Chip Dozen

ARTIST	MOMENT OF ENTRY/ ENTRY STYLE	GUARDIAN MUSEUM	LEAD GALLERY	CELEBRITY COLLECTORS	CHEERING SECTION	PRICE OF ADMISSION*
Jasper Johns	1956/ cool de Kooning	Jewish Museum/ Whitney	Leo Castelli	Philip Johnson/ The Burton M. Tremaines	Alan R. Solomon	$150,000
Robert Rauschenberg	1956/ collage shock	Jewish Museum/ Museum of Modern Art	Castelli/ Sonnabend	The Tremaines/ The Robert R. Sculls	Solomon	$150,000
Helen Frankenthaler	1957/ Impressionism without impressions	Whitney	André Emmerich	The Robert B. Meyers/Roy R. Neuberger	Barbara Rose	$50,000
John Chamberlain	1959/ 3-D de Kooning	Guggenheim	Castelli	The Sculls/ The Tremaines	Diane Waldman	$60,000
Ellsworth Kelly	1959/ Empty elegance	MOMA	Castelli	The Robert Rowans/ The Morton J. Hornicks	E.C. Goosen	$60,000
Frank Stella	1959/ pre-Pop deadpan	MOMA	Castelli/ Blum Helman	The Sculls/Johnson Eugene Schwartz/ Carter Burden	William Rubin	$60,000
Andy Warhol	1961/ the brand-name image	Whitney	Castelli	The Sculls/ The Tremaines/ Johnson	Himself	$60,000
Roy Lichtenstein	1961/ the comic book image	Guggenheim	Castelli	Johnson/ The Tremaines	D. Waldman	$100,000
Claes Oldenburg	1962/ squeezable sculpture	MOMA	Castelli	The Tremaines/ The Sculls/ Johnson	B. Rose	$100,000
Kenneth Noland	1963/ awning art	Guggenheim	Emmerich	Schwartz/ Burden	Clement Greenberg/ Michael Fried	$30,000
Robert Morris	1964/ building-block art	Whitney	Sonnabend Castelli/	Johnson/ The Sculls/ Giuseppe Panza	Himself	$100,000
Carl André	1964/ SoHo squares	Guggenheim	Paula Cooper/ Susan Caldwell	Heiner Frederich/ Panza	D. Waldman	$200,000

*Approximate price for a recent, large-scale work.

That's quite a responsibility. Little things like self-expression pale before something so monumental. And if the work is inevitable, it must be immutable, too. The Impressionists at least had the advantage of being dead before the cognoscenti discovered their historical inevitability, an honor that most critics of the time reserved for the official art of the salons. From his consistent representation on the chart, it seems Leo Castelli must have an advance-warning system tuned to the vagaries of history. At 73, Castelli's elegant, savvy presence continues to dominate the upper levels of the New York art world.

Dealers, celebrity collectors, and cheering critics fuel an artist's ascent, but they don't enjoy the power to affix the blue-chip stamp to an artist's career. A major New York museum must give the nod. Willem de Kooning didn't have his first one-man show in a gallery until he was over 40 years old. On the other hand, Jasper Johns's first retrospective, put on by the Jewish Museum in 1964, came when the artist was 34. No one makes the blue-chip list without at least one premature retrospective—Johns, Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol have each had two.

It is the curators of the Jewish Museum (before 1972-73), the Whit-

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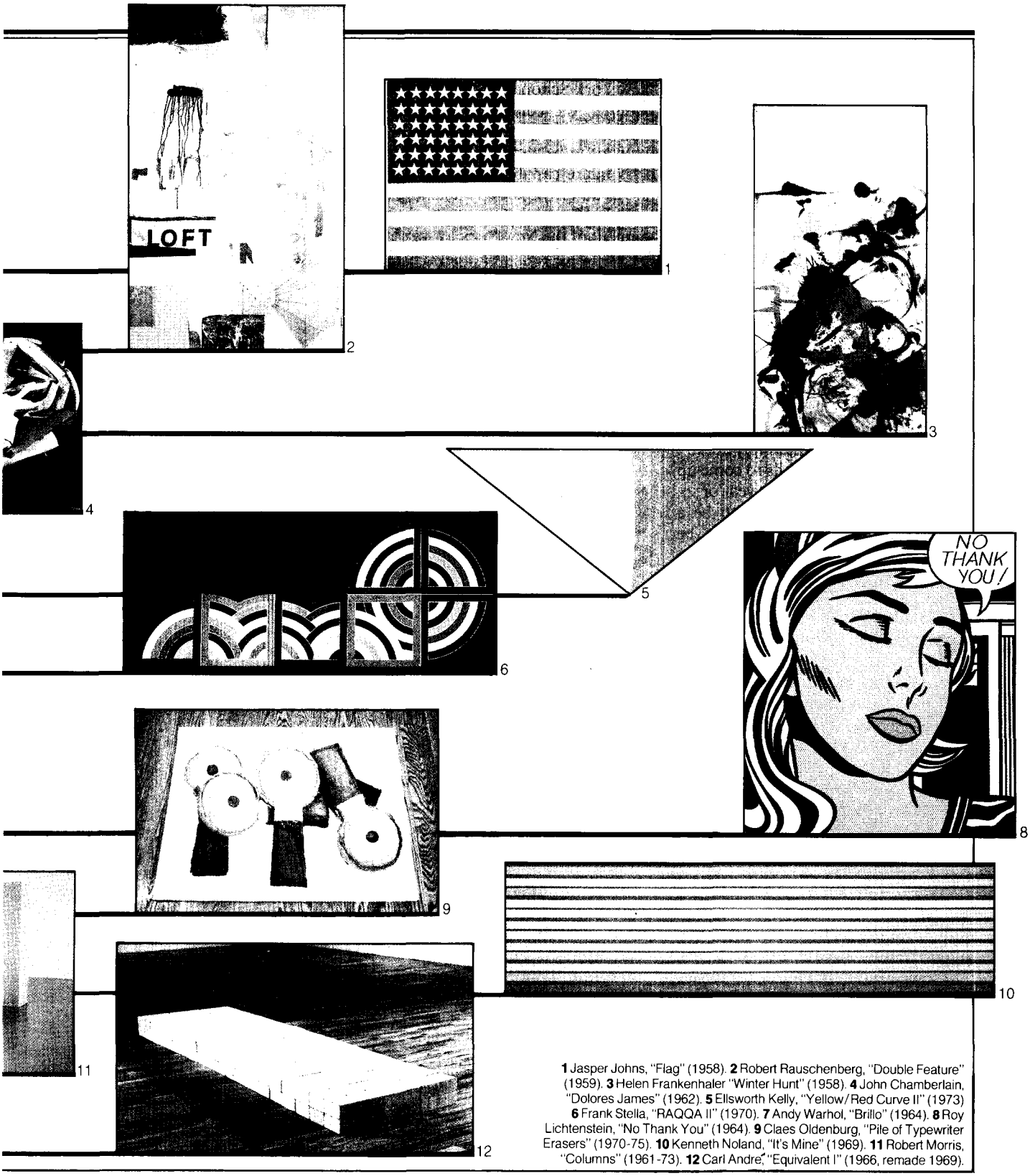

1 Jasper Johns, "Flag" (1958). **2** Robert Rauschenberg, "Double Feature" (1959). **3** Helen Frankenhaler "Winter Hunt" (1958). **4** John Chamberlain, "Dolores James" (1962). **5** Ellsworth Kelly, "Yellow/Red Curve II" (1973) **6** Frank Stella, "RAQQA II" (1970). **7** Andy Warhol, "Brillo" (1964). **8** Roy Lichtenstein, "No Thank You" (1964). **9** Claes Oldenburg, "Pile of Typewriter Erasers" (1970-75). **10** Kenneth Noland, "It's Mine" (1969). **11** Robert Morris, "Columns" (1961-73). **12** Carl Andre, "Equivalent I" (1966, remade 1969).

ney, the Guggenheim, and the Modern who turn market-level wisdom into the judgment of history writ large. It is they who crank, lever, and winch the tentative opinions of critics up to those lofty heights where one speaks of single-handed artistic achievement, of historical inevitability, of bodies of work that have shown themselves to be crucial to an understanding of the art—nay, the culture—of our times. Once that sort of thing starts to be said under the imprimatur of a New York museum, an artist's market is assured. Only he can disrupt it.

And that happens. Throughout the Seventies, the blue-chip list got steadily smaller, for the most part because candidates for inclusion changed their styles too quickly or not quickly enough. John Chamberlain has consistently refused to play safe with the blue-chip status his crumpled-metal sculptures brought him in the late Fifties. For nearly two decades, he has followed his own—not the market's—urges in a variety of directions, from spray paintings on metal to foam-rubber furniture. Recently he returned to his "entry style," pushed it toward monumentality, and now his career is back on track.

If an artist moves too slowly, his

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work no longer looks aesthetically adventurous. His revolutionary aura dims. This happened to Larry Poons, who was a solid young blue-chip contender in the early Seventies. Then his art got stuck in the theoretical mire that surrounds color-field painting. Poons's art hasn't changed much lately, except insofar as the incoherent build-up of color on his canvases has gotten more and more bilious over the seasons. He is invisible in blue-chip circles, which are merciless. It might be possible for him to eke out a career as an historically inevitable figure in Boston or Houston or Denver—Poons and other second-string color-field painters seem to be managing that—but New York, the center of the art market, simply doesn't focus on an artist who fails to come up with a new look every other year or so.

If aesthetic experiment is to be a commodity, its production must be carefully controlled. This is attended to by the interlocking mechanism of museums and curators, dealers and critics, art magazines, and, of course, artists. If too many diamonds were to come onto the market all at once, the value of every carat would plummet. Likewise, the blue-chip regions of the art world prevent the official, museum-certified view of art history from getting cluttered. If that view were allowed to become too full, too responsive to the staggering variety of recent American art, it would become obvious that no one artist bears very much historical significance on his own shoulders. So the blue-chip marketing system hums along, an increasingly complex mechanism, reducing art history to an exceedingly simple pattern. The list of blue-chip artists has a built-in tendency to get shorter by the decade.

An artist gets on it by "solving" some crucial aesthetic "problem." Jasper Johns made the list in the mid-Fifties by bringing the spew of Abstract Expressionist paint under control. By then, the first generation of the New York School had made its international splash. American art was marching onward and upward—and yet there was a difficulty. All the smeared, dripped, and spattered paint of Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Jackson Pollock was exceedingly hard to interpret. What were all these Expressionists expressing? The question was further complicated by the milling crowd of second-generation paint splashers. Then Jasper Johns made his historically inevitable entrance.

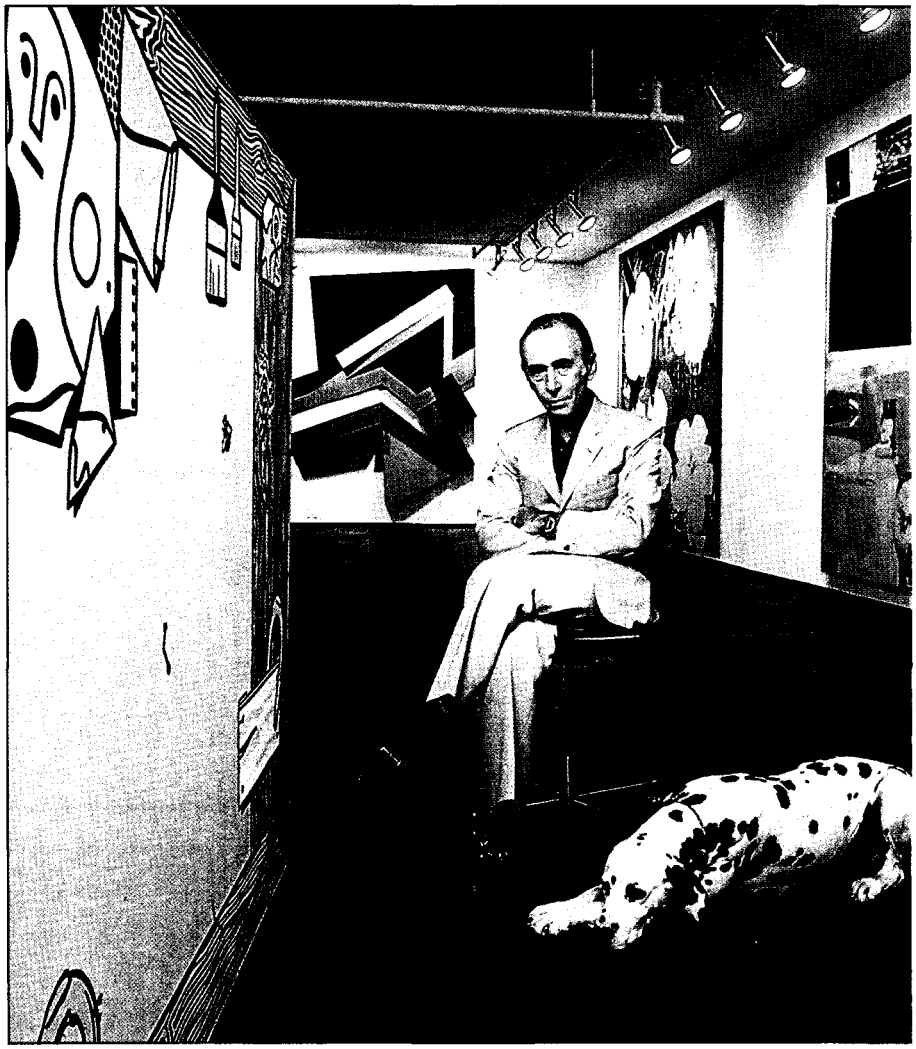
He channeled the volcanic rivers of New York School pigment into simple patterns: the concentric rings of the *Targets*, the stripes of the *Flags*. Johns happens to be a major artist, a world-class figure capable of aesthetic risks just as dangerous as any taken by Pollock, Picasso, or Cézanne. But for that segment of the New York art world on the lookout for safe bets, he became the Emily Post who taught Abstract Expressionism how to behave. This was most appreciated in those culturally ambitious circles whose highly visible *éminence grise* is Philip Johnson.

Johnson made significant early purchases of Johns's work. Other taste-making collectors followed: the Burton Tremaines, the Ben Hellers, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. By the end of the Fifties, critics had begun to single Johns out for special attention. With very few exceptions, their terms of praise tended in those years to be vague—lots of assurances that Johns was showing himself to be a pivotal figure in the swing away from Abstract Expressionist heat to a new coolness.

While Jasper Johns was teaching Abstract Expressionism how to behave, Robert Rauschenberg performed a somewhat different service. Instead of calming the furor, he turned it into public spectacle. His combine paintings, with their lapel-grabbing, never-say-die wit, drag first-generation anguish out of the shadows of the soul into the glare of an art-historical circus. Yet, for all its clamor, Rauschenberg's is always an elegant circus.

Indeed, no artist makes the preferred list without a command of elegant form. At first glance, John Chamberlain's crushed auto body sculptures look like junk. To the second glance of the initiated eye, they look like Willem de Kooning's paint spew in three dimensions—static, serene, and monumental.

Ellsworth Kelly has blue-chip status because his dealer, his collectors,



Artists picked by gallery-owner Leo Castelli frequently become ultra fashionable.

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and all the writers who have ever backed him can depend on his ability to find, year in and year out, some new, imperturbable revision of the monochrome field—that ultimate image which made its New York debut in Barnett Newman's work of the late Forties. Working with one panel or many, on canvas, sheets of painted steel, or finely polished wood, Kelly produces elegance as reliably as the *New York Times* produces facts. This, in the eyes of true believers, *must* be history.

Helen Frankenthaler redid the often grubby palette of Abstract Expressionism in sparkling pastels, thus guiding the canvas toward a Holy Grail dubbed "pure opticality" by sympathetic critics. Since those same critics, as well as their soulmates among curators, claimed "pure opticality" as the final goal of painting, Frankenthaler's art was granted a magical significance. Tagged a color-field painter, she dragged a number of artists along in her wake, one or two of whom still cling to blue-chip status—including Kenneth Noland.

Minimalists offered a comparable millennium—the revelation of sculpture's true nature—and that is how Carl André and Robert Morris built up enough historical inevitability to make the list. And the Pop artists showed how the big scale and enveloping images of Pollock, Newman, and other father figures could be adjusted to admit signs of ordinary life, from comic strips and soup cans to dollar bills. Then there's Frank Stella. For over 20 years he has stayed on top, reliably producing novelty. He has played the game with such flair that the game itself has become the subject of his art.

Among this elite, only Carl André slowed his style changes to a near-halt during the Seventies and yet still managed to hold on to his blue-chip status. During the same period, however, he put his personal image through more than enough public changes to make up the difference. André is alone in having shifted the focus from revolutionary object to revolutionary self.

Warhol is the quintessential member of the blue-chip list. He is a number of other things as well. He has more hats than the average circus family has heads, and it is with the greatest of ease that he flies through the air from role to role. A history-book artist on one hand, he is a steady producer of hot new images on the other. (Warhol's latest paintings are encrusted with a layer of industrial diamonds.) Warhol is a fad-and-fashion arbiter for a rather shadowy social set and, in the full glare of the gossip columns and the happy-talk segments of the news, he is a celebrity among celebrities. Almost incidentally, he is one of our most disquieting artists. But that is not what put Warhol on the blue-chip list nor what keeps him there.

His career demonstrates more clearly than any other the workings of the blue-chip mechanism—a shocking new style to vault him onto the map, Philip Johnson's attention, critical follow-up, then an early retrospective justified by high-flying curatorial claims. And Warhol makes it unmistakably clear that the artist himself must be the master at the control panel of the machine. No dealer, critic, or curator can tell an artist how to change his style or at what speed he ought to make the change. Some of our more arrogant critics have tried, and the careers of the painters who took their advice—such as Poons, Bannard, and other second-string color-field painters—have failed. Only the blue-chip artist himself knows just the right mix of caution and audacity needed to keep his style afloat. That knowledge cannot be worked up from a chart of market variables. It comes in the form of excruciatingly delicate intuitions, of which Warhol has always had so many that he can afford to take an offhand attitude toward his career.

The New York art market demands a new look—but not too new—every other year or so.

When Warhol's *Portraits of the '70s* opened at the Whitney late in 1979, a television interviewer was on hand to ask him for a response to some experts' allegations that his art is not, in the light of the ages, really first-rate. Under the beady eye of the mini-cam, Warhol responded, "The experts are probably right." A blue-chip Pop artist need care only about other major players in the blue-chip game. He doesn't even have to pay attention to all of them—especially not those on the Minimalist and color-field teams. So long as his standing as an historical figure, a founding father of Pop Art, is respected, Warhol will rank among the blue-chip revolutionaries. And his art will be good business.

How long will it keep working for Warhol? One hears over and over (and, of course, off the record) that blue-chip dealers must regularly step in to buttress prices when their stars' work comes up for auction. If the blue-chip mechanism worked at 100 percent efficiency, this wouldn't be required. Hence the need for such confidence-boosters as the million-dollar sale of Johns's *Three Flags*. Andy Warhol admits that he hears about price protection all the time, but adds that he never sees anyone—dealer or collector—making the effort on his behalf. "I usually feel disappointed the morning after an auction," he says.

It is hard to imagine Warhol losing his touch—or that Johns, Rauschenberg, or Lichtenstein will lose theirs. After all, they and a few others invented the blue-chip artist's role. Without them to keep improvising from season to season, the role might collapse. With it would go the high end of the contemporary-art market. Too many aesthetic power brokers have a stake in preventing that particular disaster to make it a likely occurrence.

Nonetheless, the flood of new art, artists, and art institutions that got underway in the late Sixties is still raging full-force. Eventually it could result in a situation so chaotic—"pluralistic" is the art-world tag—that even the most sophisticated maneuvering would not sustain the image of the blue-chip artist. Or that image might well be handed on to those artists who form a second rank of "historically inevitable" presences—including such artists as Brice Marden, Robert Ryman, and Mark de Suvero.

So the outlook for the foreseeable future is this: Marginal Minimalists and color-field painters will slip off the list; they will be replaced by slightly fresher "revolutionaries"; and the machine will spin on producing a version of historical truth that is, first and foremost, profitable. ■

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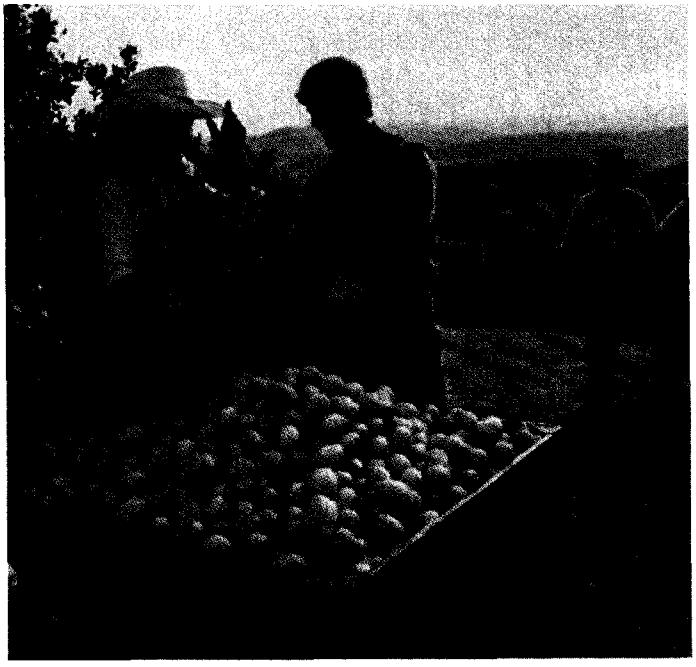

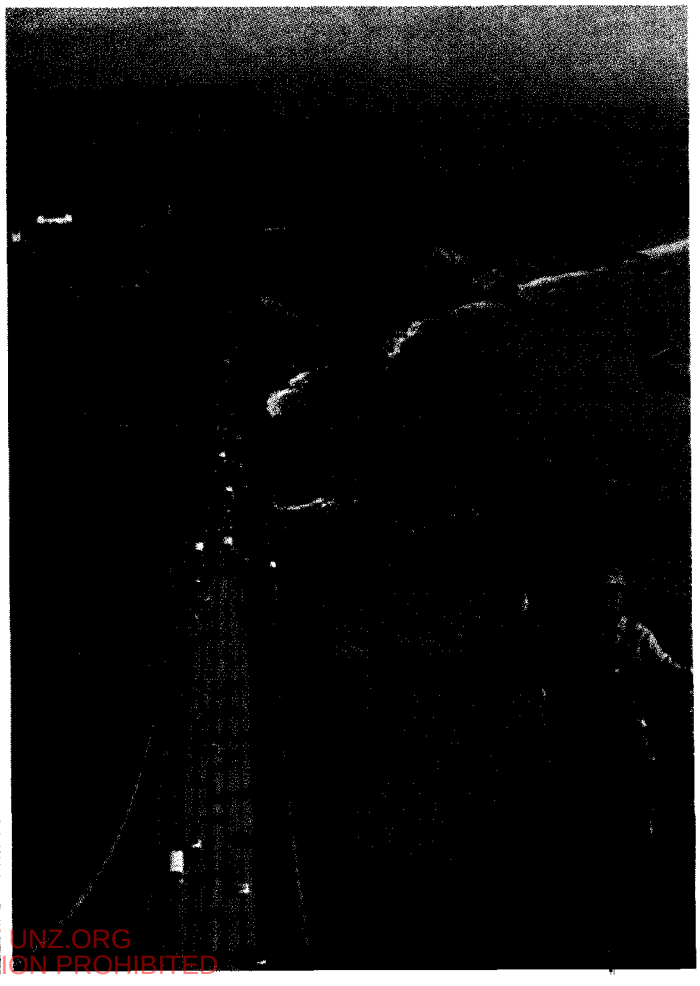

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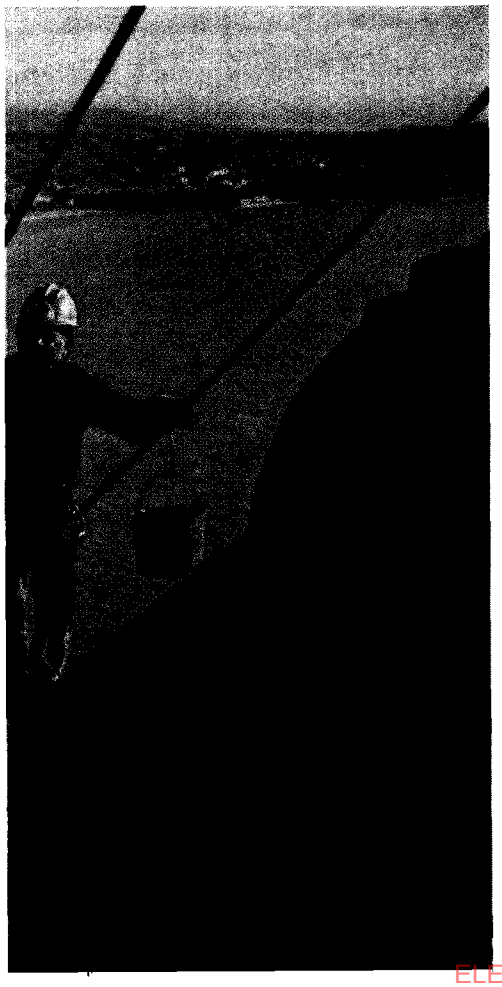
make it golden.



In Maine, the sound of the sea is bred in the bone; in New Hampshire, the silence of the mountains. Kansans live intimately with sun and rain, and Arizonans with the desert.

The Californian feels the elemental tug of all these—the vast Pacific, High Sierra, sun-drenched valleys and sun-baked deserts—and it makes him different. From the fishermen off the Pacific coast to the backpacking family in Yosemite to the bridge painters high over the Golden Gate, Californians live, work and play in ways as diverse as their state.

But they are all alike in one way: they are all innovators. They had to be, from the beginning. California has a magnificent coast but not enough harbors—so they built the largest man-made harbor in the world. It's a land of rich soil but without enough water—so Californians constructed one of the world's most extensive irrigation systems.

Californians innovate in nearly everything from fads and fashions to new lifestyles—and often the rest of us follow their lead. They were, among other things, the first to make our famous Marlboro brand the Number One selling cigarette, two years before the rest of the world.

But what delights Californians most is finding better ways to live with nature. The lemon groves of our Ventura Coastal Corporation, for instance—which supply the refreshing flavor of our 7UP—grow on hillsides so steep that they were, to all but Californians, "unplantable." Similarly under-used hillsides now provide golf courses and homesites for our prize-winning community at Mission Viejo. At San Francisco, our Milprint plant creates innovative packaging to protect California's food products. And at our spanking new brewery at Irwindale, our Miller Brewing Company recycles tons of valuable aluminum cans—at a social and economic profit to all Californians.

California's natural riches may well have made it the "Golden State" even before the first Indians arrived. But today's California is golden because Californians make it golden.

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Photographs by Larry Dale Gordon of Los Angeles

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Peter O'Toole's Dramatic Comeback

by Robert F. Moss

Peter O'Toole is wearing his emerald green socks today. He is gesturing with his black cigarette holder, another long-standing adornment. The Apollonian face remembered from *Lawrence of Arabia* and *The Lion in Winter* now appears permanently flushed and fatigued from a long love affair with "Madame Bottle," as O'Toole refers to alcohol. He looks a decade older than his 48 years. The famous blue eyes survey baskets of fruit that well-wishers have sent to his Beverly Hills hotel room. "Strange that no one sends a man flowers in America," he observes. The comment is O'Toole's equivalent of small talk. The cigarette holder is for effect. And, as befits an Irishman, the emerald green socks are for luck.

Oddly enough, the socks appear to have rewarded O'Toole's faith. After a long season of near-obscurity, the actor now has a room at the top again. This career is infamous for careening from remarkable highs (the lunatic earl in the film, *The Ruling Class*) to remarkable lows (a *Macbeth* on stage that one London critic proclaimed "the worst Shakespearean disaster since the burning of the Globe"). A year ago, O'Toole was on view only in expensive pornography (*Caligula*) and box-office bombs (*Zulu Dawn*).

This month, he is both an Academy-Award contender for his much-acclaimed performance as Eli Cross in *The Stunt Man* and the powerful star of the most expensive television series ABC has ever made, the $22-million *Masada* (aired April 5-8). In this eight-hour mini-series, O'Toole plays General Flavius Silva, a commander of Roman troops in ancient Judea during Rome's seven-year war against the Zealots, a Jewish sect whose refusal to surrender made their name a synonym for ideological determination.

O'Toole's remarkably swift comeback, like almost everything else in his professional and personal life, is extreme. An Irish Catholic who grew up in the slums of Leeds, England, he began his career as an outsider breaking the conventional mold of English acting. At the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, where technique is taught as objectively as mathematics, O'Toole studied alongside such famous classmates as Albert Finney, Richard Harris, and Alan Bates. He graduated just as the winds of change were beginning to rattle the English acting tradition.

Because the ideal of the British middle class has always been a suave surface, a complementary acting style had arisen. The poise, urbanity, and cut-glass diction of Alec Guinness, of James Mason, of Michael Redgrave are what we have come to expect from the long tradition of classically trained English actors.

But when O'Toole and his colleagues were embarking on their careers in the late Fifties, a new guard of English playwrights was introducing a new sort of English play: the working-class drama that would soon dominate the London stage. In these plays, beginning with John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, lower-class heroes rebelled against the status quo. And so did the performers who appeared in them. The angry young plays of Osborne and his contemporaries required angry young actors, who hadn't lost their empathy for the masses and the vernacular. Those playwrights found their voices in the dialects of O'Toole and his classmates. By the early Sixties, Kenneth Tynan, the Zeus of British theater critics, had pronounced O'Toole, Finney, and Harris the best actors of their generation.

At the forefront of this crowded field, O'Toole came to represent a new breed of English leading man, unlike any previous British actors, whose chilly temperaments and self-restraint seemed to preclude raw emotions. But these younger performers had no difficulty raising their voices in front of an audience. In comparing O'Toole to Ralph Richardson and John Gielgud, *New Yorker* film critic Pauline Kael astutely describes the central difference: "O'Toole's king (in *The Lion in Winter*) suggested physical strength and heroic power. He could bellow. (Can one imagine Gielgud bellowing?) He could be brutal. (Can one imagine Richardson as a brute?)"

Although his technical training places him within the British acting tradition, O'Toole's spiritual kinship is with John Barrymore, Marlon Brando, George C. Scott, and other powerful, impassioned American performers. His emotional storms could have blown across the Atlantic from Lee Strasberg's Actor's Studio, where the Method approach to acting reigns. Richard Rush, the American who directed *The Stunt Man*, notes that O'Toole, like Brando and other practitioners of the Method, works hard to "personalize" his roles. "O'Toole can reach back into a lot of personal experience in shaping a part," says Rush. O'Toole readily admits: "Brando has been a tremendous influence on

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me." And certainly, O'Toole does bring to his work some of the sheer animal power for which Brando is famous.

In England, however, it is Lord Laurence Olivier with whom he is most often compared. Like Olivier, O'Toole first achieved international recognition as a handsome leading man who preferred to pursue diverse character roles. But there is an essential difference between them. Olivier assembles his performances in the empirical, British fashion: by observation, research, and painstaking accumulation of detail. He camouflages himself in a role, leaving the audience unable to discern the real Olivier. O'Toole, however, doesn't hide behind the part. With his excesses and intensity sprawling across the stage or screen, he often appears to be telling us as much about himself as he is about the character. And, on occasion, we feel as if we are getting to know the real Peter O'Toole very well indeed.

The anger that O'Toole and his comrades brought to their roles surfaced in their personal lives, too. As critics tracked their professional coups, reporters smirked over their private difficulties. Alcohol, for instance, has undermined the careers of Richard Harris and Richard Burton. But for O'Toole, the collision between his private and professional lives has proven particularly damaging.

Asked about his alcoholism, O'Toole responds with quiet pride, "I haven't had a drink in nine years." (Several press reports have taken exception to that statement.) He has told interviewers that he stopped imbibing simply because "it was a bore." But another source comments, "He doesn't drink because if he does, he'll die. They took his pancreas out."

Boris Sagal, who directed O'Toole in *Masada*, considers his star "a self-destructive individual. The man never stops smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee. And God knows what else he takes on the side to keep himself going." A former *Penthouse* executive connected with the *Caligula* production is less oblique about O'Toole's pick-me-ups, asserting that the actor was on cocaine throughout the filming of that movie.

O'Toole's unconventional behavior has precipitated two instances of physical collapse, the dissolution, in 1975, of his 16-year marriage to actress Sian Phillips—and at least one lawsuit. Joseph E. Levine, who produced *The Lion in Winter*, charged that O'Toole's drunken escapades drove the picture over budget. In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1972, O'Toole recollected that one of Levine's people produced some "startling evidence": "I never knew what it was, but I gather it was something pretty hairy. I must have been urinating in a doorway or something." The costar, Katharine Hepburn, threatened to quit unless the hijinks were curbed. In an unsuccessful court battle, Levine sought to withhold a portion of his star's salary.

O'Toole courts excess as much as success. "Of course," he acknowledges. "Otherwise, everything would be bland and mediocre."

O'Toole is well aware that he courts excess as much as success. In conversation, he gestures freely with his cigarette holder, and he favors, as does Eli Cross in *The Stunt Man*, florid outfits (turquoise pants, bright blue shirts, and silk scarves). "Of course I've had many troughs and crests," he acknowledges. "One must strive. Otherwise, everything would be bland and mediocre." As Pauline Kael wrote of the flamboyant film director in *The Stunt Man*, "Eli Cross could be called almost anything and it wouldn't be wrong and it wouldn't insult him." The same holds true for O'Toole. "There's a larger-than-life quality about O'Toole offstage and on," agrees George Eckstein, producer of *Masada*.

In his finest professional moments no matter how flamboyant, O'Toole has drawn on his outsider sensibility that the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts couldn't erase. His most memorable characters have ranked as renegades, whether kings or commoners. In his first major screen role, O'Toole played Lawrence of Arabia, a visionary who was out of step with everyone else simply because his strides were much longer. Although O'Toole was already a major star on the British stage by his mid-twenties, *Lawrence of Arabia*, released in 1962, propelled him to international glory overnight. In his next film, *Becket* (1964), opposite Richard Burton as Thomas à Becket, he starred as the high-strung, histrionic Henry II, who seemed to have as many moods as he did subjects. In each of his first two starring roles, O'Toole captured an Academy-Award nomination.

O'Toole went on to win three more Oscar nominations: for *The Lion in Winter* (1968), *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (1969), and *The Ruling Class* (1972). But following the release of *The Ruling Class*, physical ailments, aggravated by his drinking, forced O'Toole into temporary retirement. When he decided to return to acting, he was stymied by a reputation for self-destruction and the box-office failures of his last few films (including *The Ruling Class*). Until recently, he subsisted on such perishable films as *Man Friday*, *Power Play*, and *Penthouse* magazine's notorious production of *Caligula*, in which O'Toole, as Emperor Tiberius, presided over a wall-to-wall orgy. He says now he took the role "out of hunger," and during the filming, he predicted that the movie was "so bad it will never be released."

While O'Toole's film career was soaring during the Sixties and plummeting during the Seventies, his career on the London stage was mostly troubled. When the popularity of working-class dramas began to ebb in England, so did critical enthusiasm for his bravura acting style. In 1963, his *Hamlet*, commissioned by Olivier for the opening of the National Theater, was pronounced too impassioned by the London critics, who preferred a more reflective, philosophical prince. Even in a vehicle conceived specifically for him—David Mercer's *Ride a Cock Horse*—he was not able to earn widespread critical acclaim.

The nadir of O'Toole's career came with his *Macbeth* at the Old Vic last season. Once again, the actor was chastised for letting his emotions pour out as prodigally as the blood with which the gruesome production was staged. In the *London Times*, Irving Wardle wrote that O'Toole's "tonal range varies between arrogance and

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O'Toole captures the vanity, valor, and despair of General Silva in *Masada*.

torment, allowing him no chance to show Macbeth's guile or diplomacy, let alone the unstained national hero of the first scene." When the Old Vic's artistic director Timothy West removed his name from the production, O'Toole's ignominy was complete.

Mention of *Macbeth* still touches a nerve in O'Toole. "Feet-of-clay department," he says, uncomfortably. "Each night became a process of proving myself. I do assure you that on the second or third night I could have done without it. But you see I had got it very wrong and I had to get it right."

Even in that humiliating hour upon the stage, O'Toole proved himself unpredictable: London audiences flocked to see the show. Its limited run was a sell-out, and the show eventually eliminated a $500,000 deficit at the Old Vic. It was a most unorthodox—and thus, for O'Toole, most appropriate—sign that a comeback was underway.

Asked if there isn't a remarkable overlap between himself and the characters he plays, O'Toole gives a standard answer: Of course, it helps if you can find something of yourself in a role, but for him, it's an unconscious process. Still, it isn't hard to see this world-weary actor through the world-weary souls he portrays in *The Stunt Man* and *Masada*. Like Eli Cross, the swaggering film director he plays in *The Stunt Man*, O'Toole revels in unorthodox behavior. Like O'Toole, Cross is a grinning, sardonic Mardi Gras float, an outsized creature who uses theatricality to his advantage.

In *Masada*, an otherwise workmanlike TV movie, O'Toole displays true stature as General Silva, capturing the vanity, valor, and private despair of the character. He also demonstrates a poignant affinity for Silva's frailties: Saddled with irrational orders from Rome, the general turns to drink, and when his servant hands him an unsolicited glass of wine, O'Toole as Silva responds, "Is the need that obvious that you can read it in my face?"

Mad Merlin that he is, O'Toole is transforming his personal difficulties into professional triumphs. Whatever his claims, the residual effects of his drinking habits are evident. His face bears the burden of numerous nights spent with Madame Bottle; his once-hearty frame now looks spidery; he moves with the loose-limbed mobility of a marionette. And yet, even as he appears to be aging prematurely, he is forging an entirely new career out of the damage he has done to himself. This seems appropriate. After all, Peter O'Toole's best role has always been Peter O'Toole. ■

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Writers I Have Known

by Norman Cousins

The vignettes of literary personalities that follow are previewed from a forthcoming book by Norman Cousins. The book, entitled Human Options *(W.W. Norton), is a collection of the author's views and observations over the course of his 35 years as editor of* Saturday Review.

WHO WAS HEMINGWAY'S GOD? HE said his god painted wonderful pictures, wrote some fine books, fought Napoleon's rearguard actions in the retreat from Moscow, battled on both sides in the American Civil War, did away with Yellow Fever, taught Picasso how to draw and Jim Thorpe how to play football and Walter Johnson how to pitch (the ball was as small as a marble when it crossed the plate, and it would kill you if it hit you, but the Big Train never dusted anyone off, ever), sired Citation, and killed George Armstrong Custer. What did Hemingway think about Scott Fitzgerald's god? Clearly monotheistic. Hemingway said he was convinced that Scott's god was Irving Thalberg, the movie tycoon.

People spoke about his pugnaciousness, his worship of bullfighters and prizefighters, his fondness for rifles and big game—all of them were real enough but they were not the larger part. The larger part was his ability to see beneath surfaces and to enable others to do the same; his sensitivity to irony and paradox; his belief in the innate heroism of people or, at least, in their need for it. He was a lover not just of life but of language. He was an atrocious speller and had trouble with grammar, but he knew how to put words together so that they laid claim on the creative imagination.

For all his literary honors, Hemingway was never sure of himself as a writer. He was miserable when he heard F. Scott Fitzgerald being praised. He liked to think of himself as Fitzgerald's mentor but for whom Scott's talents might never have fully matured. When he talked about Fitzgerald, it was always "Poor Scotty" this or "Poor Scotty" that. He tormented Mary with his worries over financial insecurity even when his lawyer persisted in telling him his royalties guaranteed him lasting financial independence. These worries never left him. Yet he was one of the three or four greatest writers—in any language—of his time. And a great writer, whatever his own inner agonies, is a prime resource of the human race. To enable people to live outside themselves is a gift beyond comparison.

WILLIAM FAULKNER DID MORE THAN to provide a literary portrait of a segment of the American South. He gave the South voice, pride, and spiritual nourishment, though many of the characters he brought to life in his novels were not distinguished for their spiritual dimensions. He was probably the greatest writer of his era and his growing recognition came at just the right time for a South that was seeking full restoration. He abhorred grandiosity. When he came to New York to revise his manuscripts and galley proofs, he would hole up in a little cubicle on the attic floor of the old 52nd Street mansion that went by the name of Random House. When I visited him in this New York setting he seemed strikingly out of

Ernest Hemingway

William Faulkner

Sinclair Lewis

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place. Just outside his window were not magnolias but mammon and megalopolis. His voice was soft and tentative against the sharp, harsh sounds of the city. Physically, he was small to the point of seeming diminutive. He infused his writing with subtle gradations of color and textures that made much of his work elusive, almost surrealistic, at times. No one better exemplified Emily Dickinson's advice, "Tell it slant."

He was supposed to be difficult to understand but the awareness and appreciation of him grew year by year. Outside the United States, literary critics who seemed uncertain about him for many years came to regard him as the finest American writer of his time. What made this evaluation all the more striking was that their earlier judgment favored Hemingway, of whom Faulkner in many ways was the quintessential opposite. The juxtaposition, whether of style or person, couldn't have been more striking. The bullfight arena versus the soft-scented Southern garden. The long stride versus the quiet, short steps. The open brawl versus the smoldering hurt. Dynamite versus lace. The world's critics were perplexed by the differences but it told them a great deal about a society that could produce both authors.

SINCLAIR LEWIS: TALL, SKINNY, angular. When he bent forward to scrutinize you, he had the aspect of a praying mantis on his hind legs. He won all the accolades the critics and the prize-givers, including the Nobel jury, had to offer. He had everything as a writer except sustaining power. The ultimate jury—people who buy and read books—never really fell in love with him. They bought his new stories but had no passion to read them a second time. Why? His characters were sharply drawn, and often they had a point to make but most of them seemed too flimsy to be totally convincing; they seemed to reflect an incomplete, grudging notion of what the human species in America was really like. However pointed his descriptions, the total picture seemed somewhat out of focus. For writers to be truly great, their books must be rediscovered, reread, speak to an eternal and universal quality in the race. Perhaps his time will come again. As for now, his time is yesterday.

THE BOOK PUBLIC AS A WHOLE HAD the erroneous impression that John Steinbeck was aloof and even diffident, but he loved good company, just so long as it was not too large, loved to travel and to meet with fellow writers in different parts of the world. I found him genuinely shy, extremely reluctant to get into public debate but deeply concerned and even agitated over public issues. He was hesitant to talk about his own books. First and foremost, he was a masterful storyteller and a creator of character.

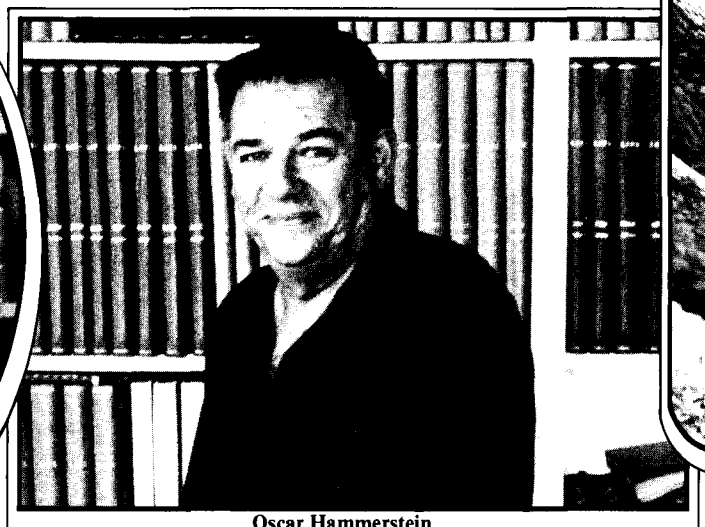
Critics have debated whether Steinbeck or Dos Passos was the great American Depression novelist. The argument is pointless. Each described a different segment of America. Steinbeck's canvas was open country—California and the American Southwest. Dos Passos wrote mostly about intellectuals or pseudo-intellectuals in the working-class life in the Eastern big cities. Steinbeck's people were non-ideological types—oddballs, human rejects, wayfarers, hangers-on, many of them; but they were warm and real and were caught up in situations that baffled but excited the imagination. They were all part of an America that never lost its youth or friendliness or frailty.

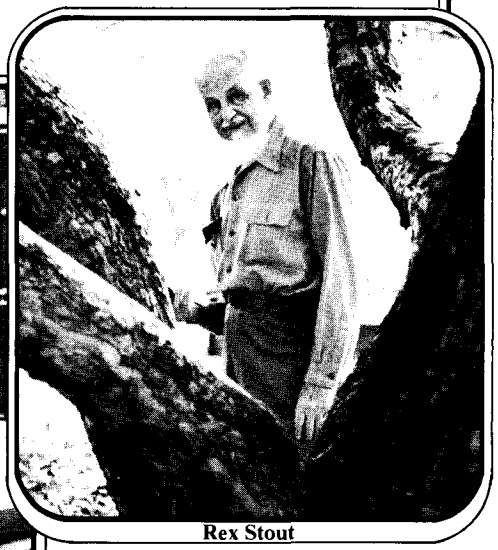
OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN WAS TOTALLY without ambiguity or circumspection. He never hesitated to make unequivocal alliances—with causes or human beings. He was deeply caught up in the main currents of his time. He was endlessly creative, instinctively friendly and trusting. He believed in children, sunny mornings, love at first sight, happy surprises, good humor, good deeds, golden wheat fields, and flaming sunsets. He had no interest in the cheap sex and casual violence that were the thematic staples of some of his contemporaries. He unabashedly extolled the essential decency of people and never got tired of lyricizing their capacity to extricate themselves from absurd and painful situations.

For a long time—especially during the first two decades of his career—the drama critics flayed him because they thought him too sentimental, too addicted to what they regarded as implausible triumphs over bleak realities. Eventually, however, almost all of them came to sing his praises along with his songs. Even the toughest of them had to admit they felt better about belonging to the human species after spending an evening with Rodgers and Hammerstein.

REX STOUT HAD A WIDE CIRCLE of friends. He teased them unmercifully, gave them a rough time in political discussions, loved them all with openness and ebullience. If I argued with him about politics, I could almost

John Steinbeck


Oscar Hammerstein


Rex Stout

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feel the thunder build up inside him. When it reached a point where it could no longer be contained, out would come, "The hell you say!" If there were hills around, the sound would boom and echo through the valleys. And then he would suddenly turn soft and grin and suggest a game of chess.

Like many other artists, he was a fascinating assortment of contrasts. He was a banker turned mystery-story writer, an expert on fine wines and foods who was one of the most passionate anti-Nazis of his time, a lover of games who was among the leaders of the world government movement. In any company, his voice was the most resonant, especially if the subject was human freedom. No mystery-story writer was more ingenious in polishing off people in his tales—or more adept at involving them in absurd situations. But he was a family man first and foremost and delighted in the placid country life.

ONCE, AT A DODGER BASEBALL GAME in Los Angeles, I asked Will Durant if he was 94 or 95. "Ninety-four," he shot back. "You don't think I'd be doing anything as foolish as this if I were 95, do you? I'd be home working." Few worked harder at writing than he did. With his wife, Ariel, he produced a vast opus on the history of civilization. Ariel described the quintessence of her husband's approach to history when she said, "Will often talked of historical figures as more real than the vanishing figures and events of the day. Luther, Erasmus, Calvin, Henry VIII, Gutenberg, Rabelais, and Copernicus were more vital, more lasting in their influence, than the politics, prizefights, murders, fashions, market reports, and baseball scores of the daily press. So we buried our heads in the living past rather than the dying present."

Critics no longer put down the Durants on the ground of inadequate scholarship. On the contrary: The Durants are hailed because they have introduced large numbers of readers to the historical procession. They have been more attracted to history's pageantry, perhaps, than to its imponderables, but they have not detached themselves from the search for meaning. They have made important connections between people and events not merely within each era but in the long perspective of history. Whether they were writing about philosophy or civilization, they were always aware that history's effects are felt far beyond the casual arena. They made no pretense of being definitive; they regarded themselves rather as synthesizers. As such, they belong to a rare breed.

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD WAS AS TALL and trim as a poplar and as gentle as a soft breeze. He had been brought up—as had most history-conscious young men of his generation—with the notion that the way to avert war was to spurn it. He was awakened by the Hitlerian realities. He put his dramatic skills to work in helping to define the issues for his fellow Americans. He had a highly developed sense of history; he was mindful of present dangers but was also captured by the vision of a world congenial to the quest for human perfectibility.

As a playwright, he never trifled with people's hopes. He gave them good reason for believing in themselves. Sherwood was one of the first writers to perceive that the consequences of events in Europe in the late Thirties extended to the whole of the human race. He knew that the Second World War was a crucible for the future. If his thinking about America's role in world affairs changed from what it had been in the early years following the First World War, it was largely because he realized that the whole of humanity was involved.

BUCKY FULLER VERY EARLY discovered the secret of perpetual curiosity and spent the rest of his life trying to give the secret away. Of all his attributes, none is more compelling than his ability to transmit to others his love for the cosmos and everything that went with it. The goodwill that radiates from him, his enthusiasm for new directions and new options, his capacity for liberating the human imagination from earthbound concepts and for propelling human beings into a new relationship with the universe—all this lights up the minds of his friends, auditors, and readers.

The affection of students for Bucky Fuller offers the strongest possible evidence that young people are responsive to the values that give affirmative energy to a society. People listen to him for hours even though they might not understand very much of what he is saying. What they did understand through him, however, is that the main end of science is not to answer questions but to generate new ones; not to relieve curiosity but to enlarge it and ignite it; not to build better machines but to enable people to know how to run them and control them. I have known very few people who came away from listening to Bucky who did not feel they had been under a starlit sky. ■

Will Durant

Robert E. Sherwood

Buckminster Fuller

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At Home in a Museum

by Henry Percy

David and Carmen Kreeger's art collection enjoys the singular honor of having had a house custom-built for it. Feeling pinched for space as their collection continued to expand, the Kreegers commissioned Philip Johnson in the early Sixties to build them new quarters. Johnson was in top form, designing for six Washington acres of Kreeger land what amounts to, in scope and conception, a private museum, reminiscent of the architect's public steel, glass, and marble creations. Johnson originally balked at the idea of designing a private dwelling, telling Kreeger, "There are easier ways to go crazy." But Johnson, who is himself the owner of a renowned collection of contemporary art, soon became intrigued by the project of tailoring a structure to house the paintings of fellow collectors.

David Kreeger says he found it exciting working with Johnson, despite tensions that he describes as natural between an architect and owners trying to impress their personality on a house. When the disagreements were aesthetic, Johnson always won out; when it came down to practical matters, however, the owners necessarily had their way. Carmen Kreeger, for instance, insisted on having adequate closet space—not in the original plan. Nor was Johnson pleased at first with Carmen Kreeger's choice of furniture. He had envisioned contemporary steel and leather—instead, Carmen filled the house with colorful period pieces. Her feminine instinct was right; the elegant 18th-century furniture provides a pleasant contrast to the unrelieved modernity of the architecture.

Johnson describes the style of the house as "Mediterranean modern" or "contemporary Moorish," designations suggested by the open feeling of wide-spaced marble columns, and the Spanish look of the vaulted, domed ceilings. The most striking characteristic of the house is its mathematical precision—all built around a basic unit, or module, defined by columns spaced 22 feet apart and marble beams that cross at a height of 11 feet. Every shape, every room, is some multiple or fraction of this basic unit. The "great hall" that forms the spine of the house is two units in height (22 feet) under the domes and three units in length (66 feet); the swimming pool outside measures 22 by 66 feet, mirroring the hall. The inner portion of the sculpture garden imitates the two-by-one modular form of the dining room. The consistent repetition of that basic pattern, Kreeger feels, "gives the house a certain serenity, a certain balance."

The decor of the house is a chaste composition of three elements—travertine marble for the columns and cross beams; anodized aluminum (which Johnson prefers to bronze because aluminum doesn't weather) for trim; and more teak than in all of Newport Harbor for floors, closets, and interior doors. The Kreegers, who love the outdoors, specified that every room have at least one wall completely of glass. This was conceived, of course, in the early Sixties when energy was cheap; Kreeger describes the house now as a "monster to heat."

Johnson had the idea of covering the walls with carpeting. This has two advantages—it doesn't show nail holes and it minimizes the ghosting of absent pictures. Thus when the Kreegers lend paintings out to exhibitions, as they often do, they aren't left with the melancholy shadow of their beloved art on the walls. And as all museums are becoming increasingly sensitive to the harmful effects of light, so too the Kreegers. They have coated the glass flanks of their dwelling with UV-10, a film that absorbs 90 percent of the destructive ultraviolet light. The drawings, which are even more susceptible to the ravages of light—even artificial light can bleed their color in a matter of years—are kept secluded by the Kreegers in a darkened, windowless hallway leading to their private quarters.

All in all, the Kreeger residence is the ideal environment for their extensive collection of approximately 150 paintings and 50 sculptures. Beginning in the mid-19th century, it extends to up-to-the-minute contemporary paintings, with works by Corot, Courbet, Monet, Sisley, Cézanne, Pissarro, van Gogh, Gauguin, Renoir, Bonnard, Degas, Rodin, Mirō, Mondrian, Picasso, Braque, Brancusi, Moore, Lipchitz, Dubuffet, Calder, Arp, Noguchi, Hofmann, Diebenkorn, Stella, Noland, Still—this is only a partial listing; a full one would read like a catalogue of every major artist of the last 150 years. (Complementing their modern sculpture are 33 pieces of African art bought from the late Helena Rubinstein's estate.)

Intriguingly, some of the artists are represented by lesser known, early works painted while the artists were searching for their mature style. David Kreeger points out that in an early Mondrian, "Dying Sunflower," the beautiful veils of color anticipate Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis. "Café de la Rotonde," painted by

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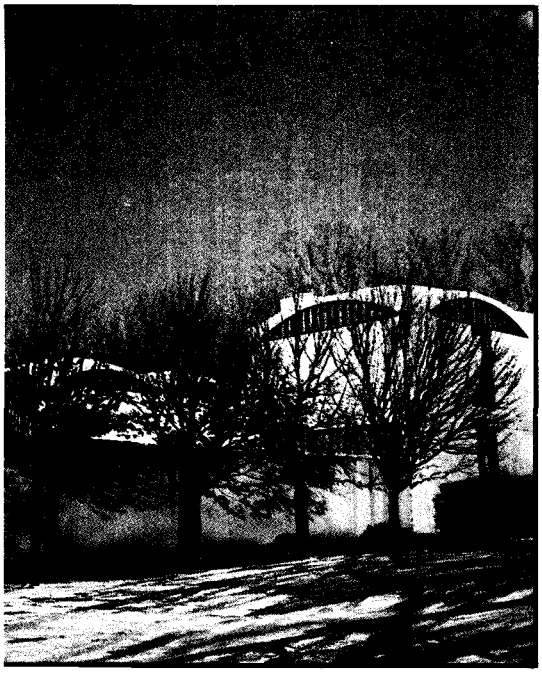

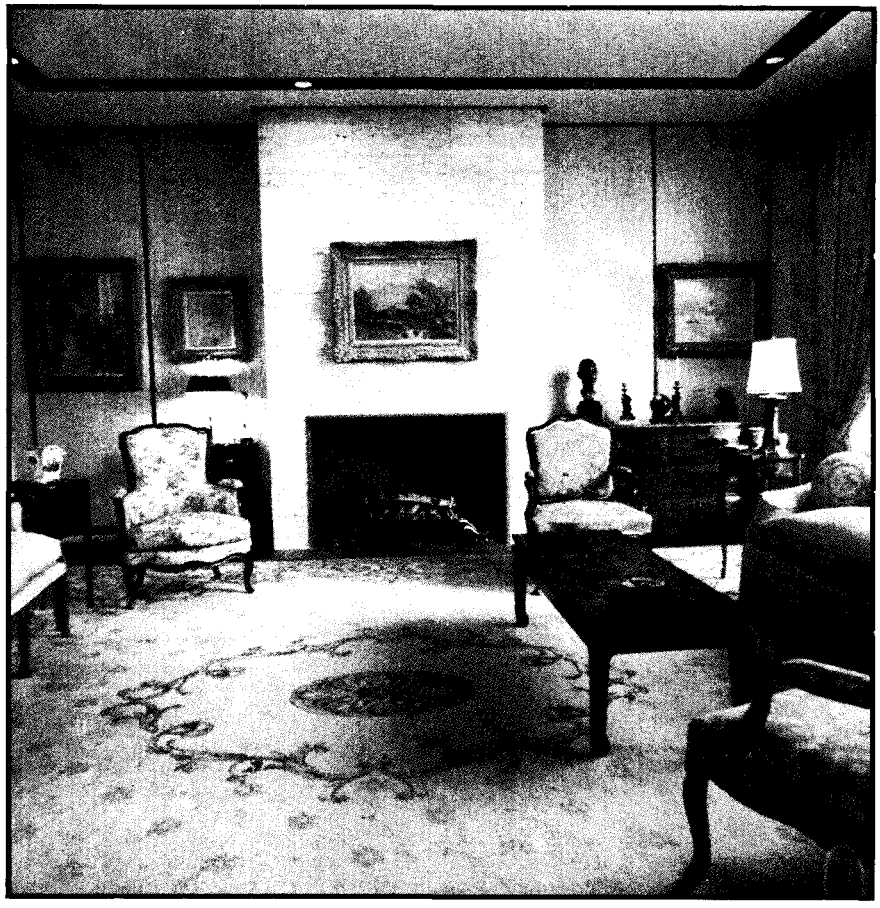

Above: the Kreegers' home. Right (left to right): Gauguin's "Aline et Pola"; Redon's "L'enfant blond"; Sisley's "Lisière de bois"; Renoir's "Venise-brouillard." Below: the dining room graced with Monets.

PHOTOS BY AMY BINDER AND DAVID FINN

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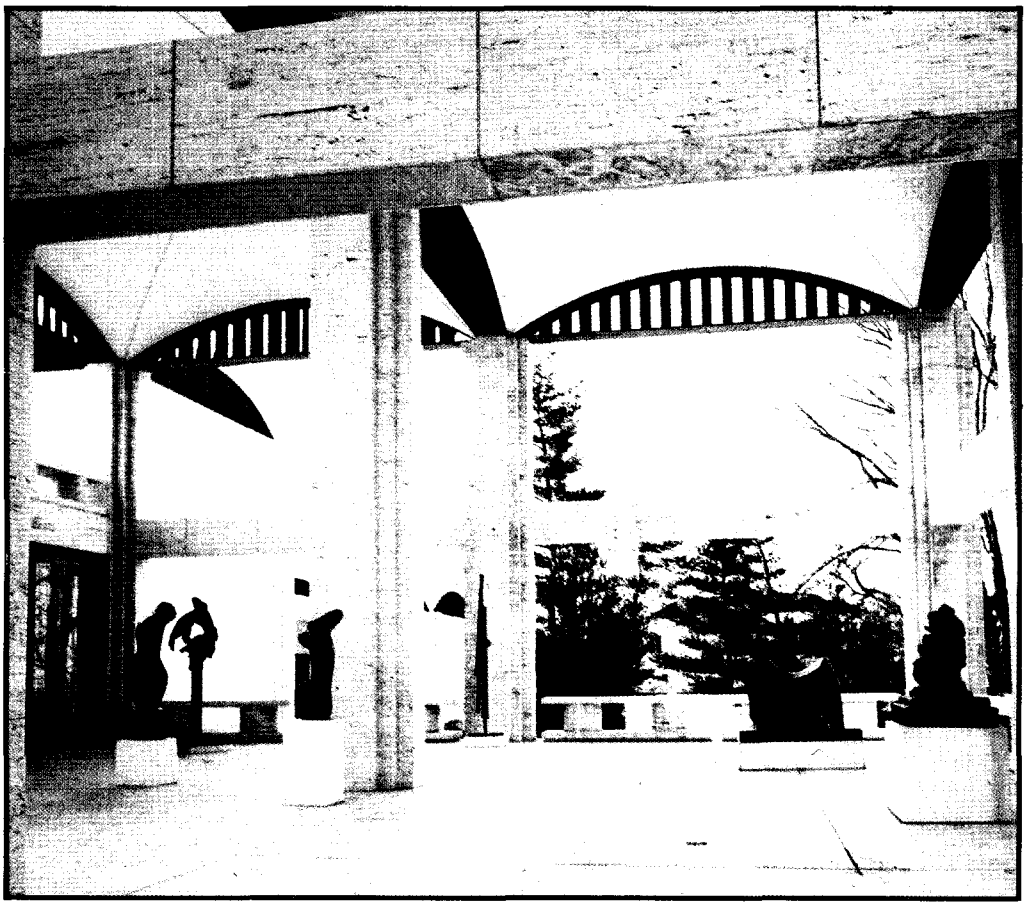

The sculpture garden (left to right): Arp's "Torse gerbe"; Somaini's "Ordalia"; Arp's "Hurlou"; Noguchi's "Soliloquy"; Moore's "Three-Piece Reclining Figure No. 2: Bridge Prop"; Lipchitz's "Hagar in the Desert."

Picasso at the age of 20, sports the artist's bold signature in the middle of a field of red on one side of the canvas. Kreeger points out the compositional imbalance of the painting, rescued in the final moment by this deft stroke—a sign, he thinks, of Picasso's genius. The Kreegers have searched catalogues and museums but have found only one other Picasso—"Crying Woman"—not signed in either bottom or top right-hand corner.

The Kreeger manse was once visited by Marc Chagall. He proposed painting a mural for the great hall, a triptych to be entitled "L'Amour, de l'Art, et de la Musique." "I made the cardinal error," relates David Kreeger, "of asking for a sketch." Chagall, who always refers to himself in the third person, replied huffily, "*Chagall ne fait jamais d'esquisses.*" Says Kreeger, "I figured this thing was going to be in six figures. I didn't want to be disappointed, so I said no dice. In retrospect, of course, it was a mistake." David and Carmen Kreeger each possess veto power over acquisitions; though in every instance, they say now, the one who vetoed regrets the decision. A friend once suggested a way around the problem: three different collections, his, hers, and theirs.

Chagall's murals weren't the only items selling for six figures when the Kreegers began collecting. Each of the 12 Monets that grace the dining room sold in that price range. How did they manage it? The Kreegers always loved art, but when they first got married they couldn't afford the originals; so they bought high-quality reproductions and covered every square inch of their modest Washington apartment with them. David Kreeger, now in his early seventies, was then working for the Justice Department. He soon left government to set up his own office, and from there got in on the ground floor of a new insurance and finance company named GEICO (Government Employees Insurance Company). The company took off in the expanding economy of the Fifties and Sixties and so did the Kreeger collection. A year or so after Kreeger retired as president, however, the company began failing and management asked him back to help restore its financial health. Those troubles caused a hiatus in their collecting, but David Kreeger says that even now, with the company prospering once again, they aren't buying much. He notes the "astronomical prices" being paid for paintings these days and the steadily depleted supply of good art as paintings get bequeathed to museums and bought up by rival collectors. Nor do the Kreegers themselves plan to send their collection back into the marketplace. "The paintings are like children to us," says David Kreeger.

The Kreegers are also accomplished amateur musicians. (David Kreeger worked his way through college and law school playing piano in a jazz band. For classical music, Kreeger plays violin, Carmen piano.) The Kreegers often hold musicales in the "great hall," which together with Johnson they designed and furnished with and ear to acoustics. These acoustics are so alive you can hear someone whispering across the room, 66 feet away, yet despite the concentration of marble and glass they produce no harsh echoes. Opposite the Steinway grand hangs a lively Braque, "Interior With a Black Vase." David Kreeger says that he especially likes to look at the painting these days when he sits at the piano to play jazz. ■

Henry Percy is a freelance writer specializing in the arts.

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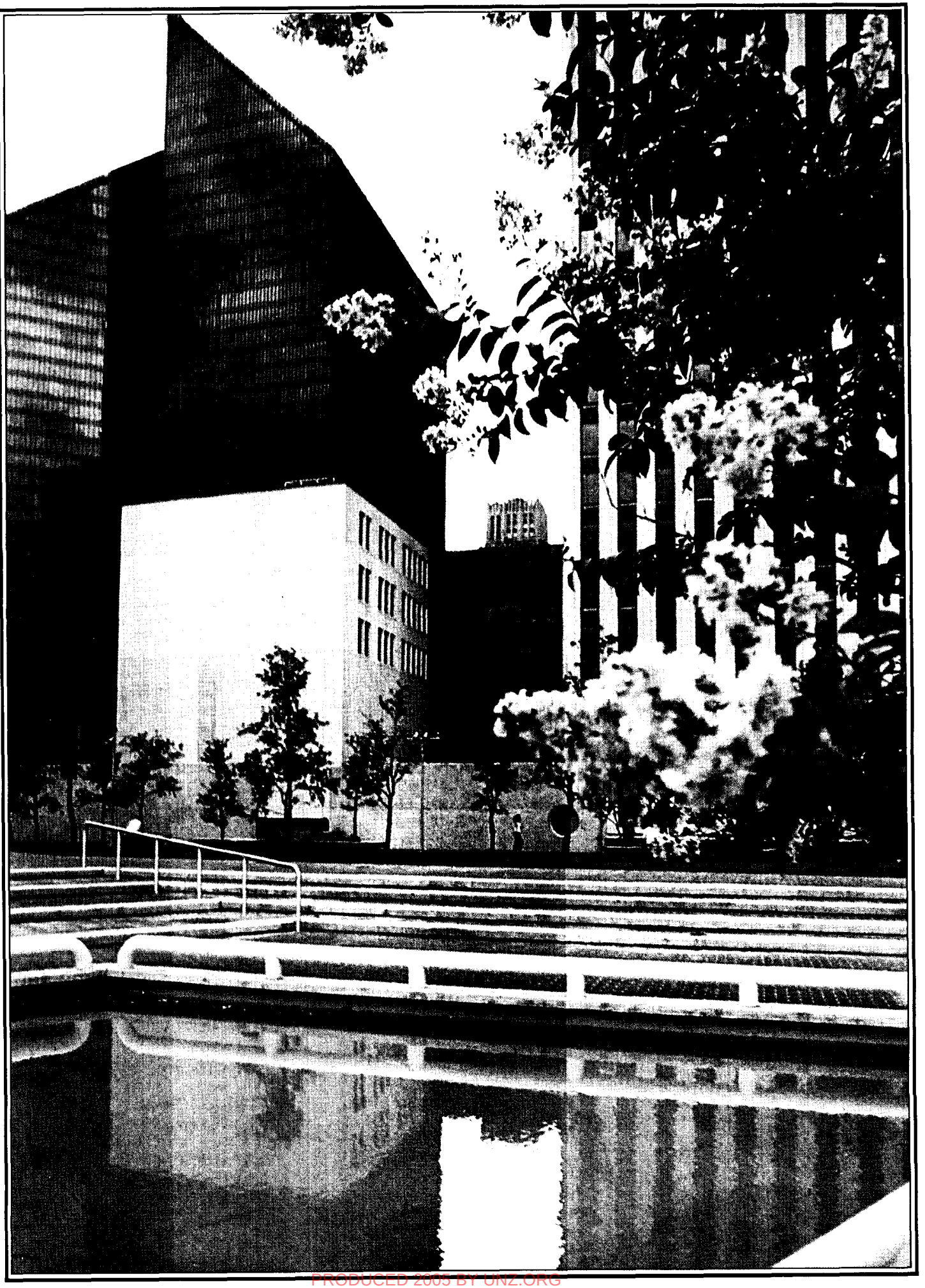
GREATER HOUSTON CONVENTION & VISITORS COUNCIL



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A Houston World Premiere

THE EVENT
by Irving Kolodin

THE CITY
by Horace Sutton

THE EVENT

On a day when communities around the country were presenting returning hostages with keys to their cities, friends and neighbors of a hostage from Houston, Texas, presented their returnee with a yellow Cadillac. Later that evening, Houston's opera lovers attended a performance in Jones Hall of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, in the original Opéra Comique version with a new English translation by Sheldon Harnick (librettist of *Fiorello* and *Fiddler on the Roof*).

If the two events seem unrelated, consider one further fact. Both acts were made possible by the generosity of individuals rather than of local governments. The neighbors of William Boyer, Jr. (who refused to have their names published) raised the money for his Cadillac on their own. The *Carmen*, in the highly appropriate production funded, for use in several cities, by the Gramma Fisher Foundation, was given in excellent style by the Houston Grand Opera, which would probably disband if it weren't for private philanthropy: The Texas Commission for the Arts' output per capita—5.3¢ per person, annually—ranks, among 50 states and 5 U.S. territories, 55th or last.

Individual enterprise is the wellspring and balance wheel of the Houston Grand Opera, whose 25th anniversary will be celebrated, April 24 through May 1, by the world premiere of *Willie Stark*, the 11th opera by Carlisle Floyd, still best remembered for his first, *Susannah*. As subject, again writing the libretto as well as the music, Floyd has reached for Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. Following the six performances in Houston there will be 16 through the month of May at Washington's Kennedy Center.

But, as has not always been his custom, Floyd was able, during his work on *Willie Stark* (going back to 1976), to observe, in workshop surroundings, scenes, an act, eventually the whole opera (last May) as it progressed. Present were friends and colleagues, even members of the press, who expressed judgments on what they heard and saw, as if Floyd were living, not in a Texas metropolis, but in the Munich of Richard Wagner's mad King Ludwig. Floyd has been able to find such a community because he is M.D. Anderson Professor at the School of Music in the University of Houston. That brings him in direct contact with the University's Opera Studio, where young performers get funded vocal education while pursuing practical experience with the Houston Grand Opera.

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Above: Carlisle Floyd, whose new opera debuts this month in Houston. Opposite: Houston's Tranquillity Park, with the Pennzoil Building in the background.

Out of this community has come a work that profited, in its preproduction phases, from the opportunity to evaluate pros and cons of treatment, to add, to deduct, to reconsider. As an instance, Floyd had a concept of utilizing film clips, in newsreel style, to create an atmosphere of time (1935) and place (a state capital in the Deep South—the character of Willie Stark was suggested by the career of Louisiana Senator Huey Long). That is now replaced by the voice of a radio announcer, heard eight times during the three acts. Among those who cheered the change was director Harold Prince, who is staging the world premiere. Though Prince didn't take a life-or-death exception to the newsreel idea, he was delighted when it was abandoned.

A perusal of *Willie Stark*'s score uncovers two elements that prompt a belief it is Floyd's best, most mature work. One is a crafty combination of sung and spoken elements; the other is a

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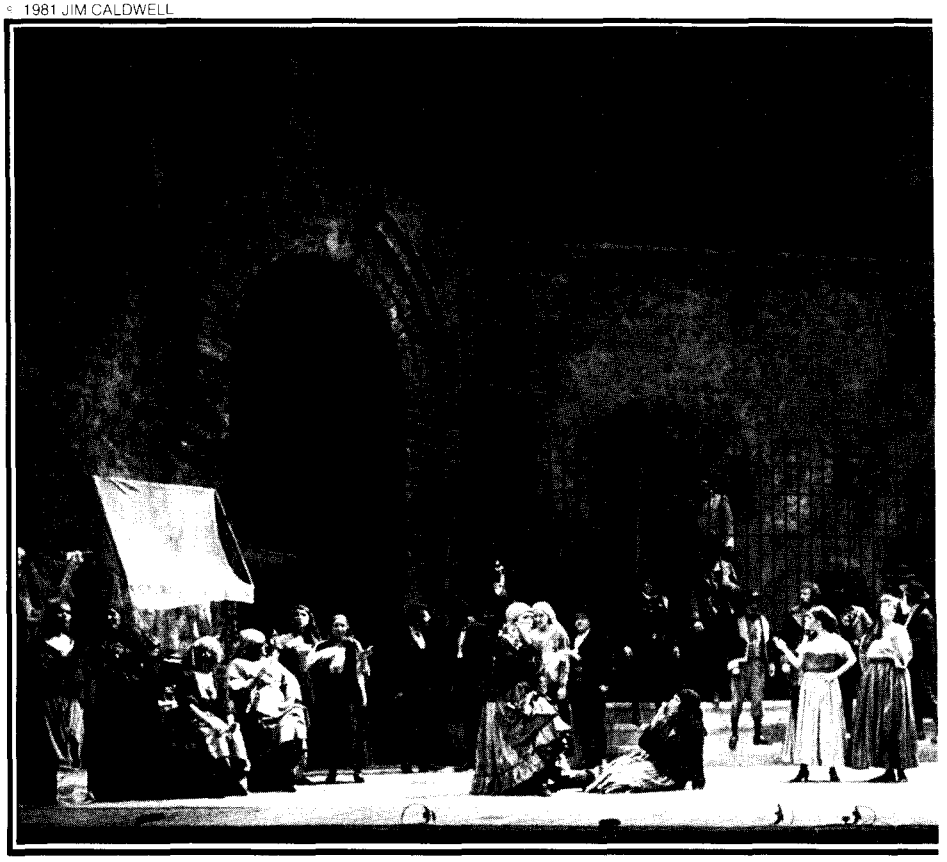


strength and distinction of melodic ideas evolved from basic themes that come and go. Characters are resourcefully defined, from recognizable thematic patterns that are suitable for development; over his 10 operas, Floyd has vastly extended his ability to shape such patterns, work with them, and draw them together when it suits dramatic purpose. Judgments about forthcoming musical productions should remain in limbo until all the problems of presentation are resolved, but I can strongly recommend a visit to Houston or Washington for *Willie Stark*.

In addition to bringing new operas to the world's attention, the Houston Grand Opera helps nurture emerging artists through its interconnections with local music organizations. These interconnections, as extensive as the underground tunnels that link most of downtown Houston's office buildings, begin with the University of Houston's Opera Studio. However, the Studio is by no means the only example of the Houston Grand Opera's outreach.

For instance, the Houston Symphony plays in the pit, and the Grand Opera's adjuncts include a third group, the Texas Opera Theater, which plays approximately 200 performances a season. These appearances are not only in its home state, but as far east as Florida and as far north as Michigan. The rule of the Opera Theater road is: leading parts one night, bits the next. Much can be learned from such intensive work, as was demonstrated by the jump made by tenor David Kuebler, from the Opera Theater's ranks to the Houston Grand Opera in one year and, after a few more years, to the Met.

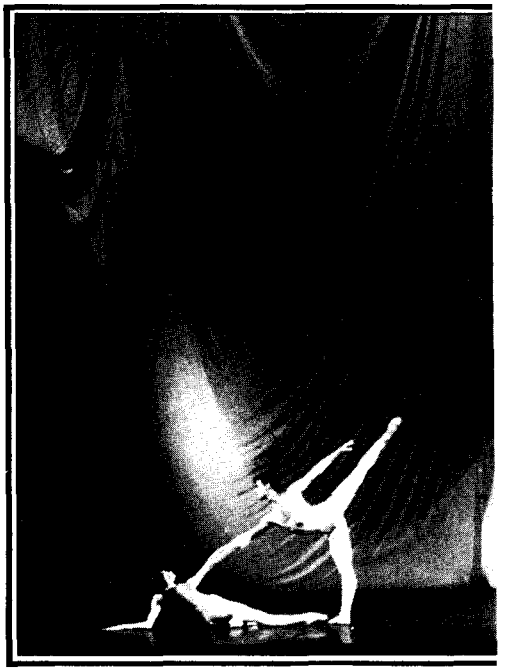
Such well-planned interrelated activity does not simply emerge from the soil. It is the product of the brilliant, opera-minded general director of the Houston Grand Opera, David Gockley, whose background includes a venture as an aspiring singer with the apprentice group of John Crosby's Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico. The outcome persuaded Gockley that he would be better off on the other side of the footlights. He was indoctrinated in the business aspects of the Santa Fe Opera before he found the opportunity in 1973 to sink roots and grow in Houston. There was talk, in 1975, of Gockley coming to the Met as an assistant to Anthony A. Bliss, when Bliss became executive director of the Met. Gockley wisely decided to stay and exploit his operatic ideas in hospitable Houston.

High among Gockley's ideas is a conviction that serious opera and light opera have more in common than is commonly recognized elsewhere (except, from time to time, at the New York City Opera). Whether the interchange is exclusively artistic, or also commercial, depends on circumstances. The participation of Broadway veteran Harnick as creator of a new English text for *Carmen* is essentially artistic. It produced the best solution to be offered in this country in many years to the problems posed by the quest for a theatrically valid version of *Carmen*. Harnick's version strips the work of the sung recitative provided, after Bizet's death, by Ernest Guiraud (a musician born in New Orleans in 1827, who went to Paris at 15 and settled there).

Some may object: "Well, didn't the Met do it that way in 1972 when the late Goeran Gentele's scheme was pursued, after his death, by Schuyler Chapin, with Leonard Bernstein conducting?" Yes, to a point; but with Marilyn Horne and James McCracken, and nearly 4,000 people in the theater.

Nothing of such grand opera character prevailed in the Houston *Carmen*. The cast was fresh, mostly young and comely, of the age and impulse to make a living experience of the caprices of Carmen. This version, as directed by Michael Kahn, clings closely to what Bizet conceived: a musical score carried forward by a play's speech and action. And from the start—by converting Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's "Sur la place, chacun passe, chacun vient, chacun va" into "Through the square, from everywhere, the passersby come and go"—Harnick strikes a stride of suitable speech pattern whose combination of rhythmic values and colloquial meaning carry to the end.

What emerges is a *Carmen* amounting to more than the mezzo's interpretation of the "Habeñera" or how the tenor delivers the "Flower Song." In the



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The Houston Grand Opera's *Carmen*, Act I: "the best solution offered, to the problems posed by the opera in years."

cast I saw, Cynthia Clarey was a vividly plausible Carmen, with a good young voice that can be developed into everything the role requires. Likewise the Don José, Riccardo Calleo, and the outstandingly good Micaela, Elizabeth Knighton. The smugglers' quintet in Act II went brilliantly, thanks to three sure, pure sounds from members of the Opera Studio. John DeMain's conducting was highly idiomatic.

Where the artistic and the commercial in Houston's approach can be found in closest communion was in the production of the Gershwins' and Dubose Heyward's *Porgy and Bess* of 1977. Immediately at hand was a responsive audience in Jones Hall that sent the production to Broadway, and from there to far places. Houston's *Porgy* could very well, on its 10th anniversary, get the kind of revival being accorded Scott Joplin's *Tremonisha*, which also reached Broadway, on its 10th anniversary this year.

Listening to the clear, well-carrying sound of *Carmen* reinforced what had been heard on a previous visit in November for Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. I asked Gockley whether amplification was utilized. He did not equivocate but answered directly: "For some productions, yes."

Asked to explain the rationale for this sinful evasion of artistic proprieties, he went on: "If you look carefully, you will see two pillar-like structures in the *Carmen* production. They enclose acoustical aids designed by Christopher Jaffe for building up the sounds of sibilants [s,z,ch,sh] to add word intelligibility through a hall as large as Jones." Does this enlarge the size of the individual voice sound? "I don't think so," he replied. "It applies to all voices equally. And we only use it with English. If you came back for Verdi's *Ballo in Maschera*, you wouldn't hear it."

GEOFF WINNINGHAM

The Houston Ballet's *Four Last Songs*, choreographed by Ben Stevenson, the company's artistic director.

One reality generally accepted in Houston is: Jones Hall is too overcrowded with bookings—concerts, opera, a resident ballet, and outside attractions—for the city's own home-based activities to co-exist compatibly. A now-empty street corner in the downtown artistic enclave may provide the answer when the Lyric Theater rises on it. Originally priced at $40 million, it has inched up to $60 million, and ground-breaking is urgent before construction costs climb further. When realized, this will add to Houston's resources a theater seating 2,000 for opera and ballet, and a smaller, much needed recital hall of about 500 seats. All would share a huge, interconnected underground parking garage now serving Jones Hall and nearby structures, such as the Alley Theater.

By then, the Houston Symphony and the Houston Grand Opera might also share the talents of Sergiu Comissiona, who has been named the Houston Symphony's music adviser and principal conductor. Comissiona began his career with the Rumanian State Opera before emigrating to Israel and then to the United States, so he offers much experience with opera. Interconnection is, after all, a way of life in Houston. ■

THE CITY

It is hard to imagine that Houston once called itself the Magnolia City. If there is one thing which it in no way represents, it is that fragrant, sweet symbol of the Old South. Yet, that is what it chose to be dubbed in the Twenties only shortly after its ship canal opened giving it access to the Gulf of Mexico, 50 miles away along Buffalo Bayou. Now it is the third largest port and the fifth most populous city in the nation. As for money, a commodity in which it is eminently interested, its total annual wages and salaries, based heavily on oil and petrochemicals, is pegged at $25 billion.

There are those who insist that this restless encampment is destined to emerge as the nation's largest city. Surely it is the most freewheeling. It has no zoning laws and few taxes. It is spread all over what was once Texas

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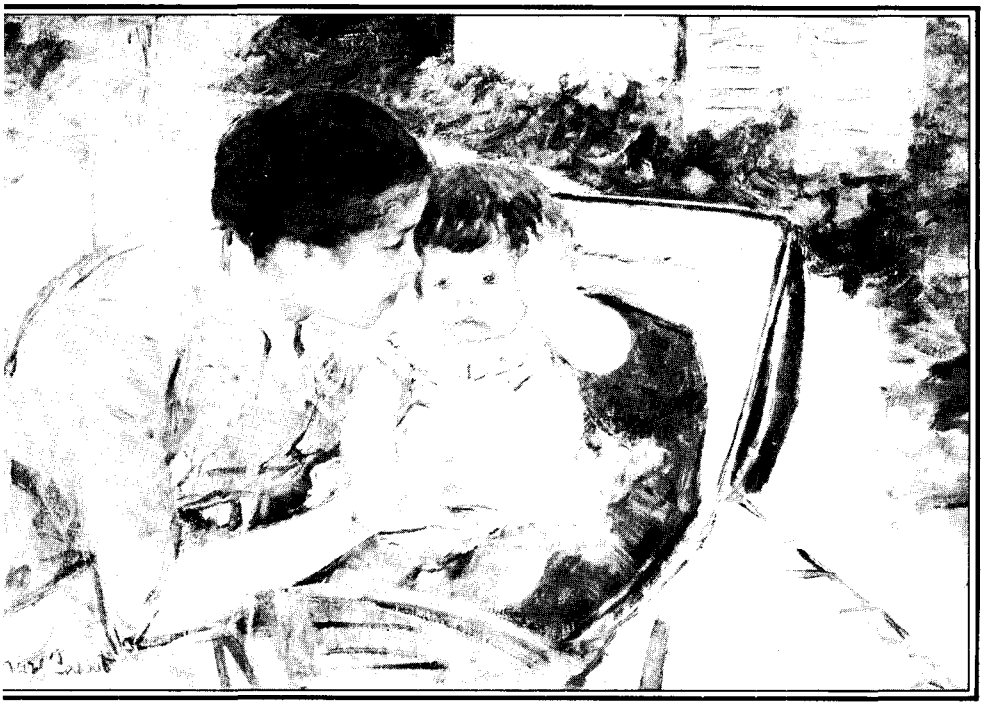

Cassat's "Mother and Child," from the John A. and Audrey Jones Beck collection at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts.

grazing land, and in its rambling way resembles Los Angeles. If it had a symbol, it would be a steel crane rampant on a building site. For lodgers coming to town, it is spending half a billion dollars this year and next to build 22 new hotels.

Now decorously known as the "Golden Buckle of the Sunbelt," Houston is a town where one can buy a mink cowboy hat for $2,400. Or alligator boots for $2,500, both available at a Western store called Cutter Bill's, which has a shoeshine stand that charges $5 for a polish.

Houston is a city that barely comes up for air in the hot summer; it has built a downtown tunnel system that connects 40 of its buildings, most of them shining skyscrapers (including one in pink granite) designed by America's most celebrated architects. This spelunker's paradise roams underground for three miles and is lined with way-stations of nourishment such as Sam's Brooklyn Deli, as well as with assorted boutiques, restaurants, and bars.

The tunnel also deposits seekers of culture and the arts a few steps away from Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, an elegant playhouse given by the Houstonian who was Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Commerce. It seats in velvety red chairs 3,000 patrons who come to be entertained by opera, ballet, and symphony. Wrapped in wheat-colored travertine, Jones Hall bursts into a blaze of light at eventide as if to portend the gala night about to unfold.

To the visitor standing under the marquee of Jones Hall on the western fringes of downtown, the heart of cultural Houston unfolds. With its nine towers rising like some castle that is at once avant-garde and medieval, the Alley Theater—now called the Nina Vance Alley Theater—sits catercorner to Jones.

Despite the power and private treasuries this growing downtown forest of buildings represent, Houstonians do not want to be without the manna they know best. It is a saving grace to many that a branch of Luther's has opened in these environs, serving beef and chicken barbecues, and "link," a local diminutive for link sausage. Draft beer is 80 cents.

For more fanciful fare downtowners might repair to Harry's Kenya Restaurant whose presence is marked by a copper, brass, and stainless-steel safari tableau applied to the outside wall. Inside one might attack the quail Véronique or the lobster St. Tropez under the watchful gaze of assorted ibexes, water buffalo, and other trophy heads mounted on the walls.

Beyond barbecue, and beyond the view of a water buffalo staring into one's soup, lie such rarefied corners as the straight-to-the-point Restaurant de France in the new Meridien, a hotel that is as French as *foie gras frais*, which employs a full complement of French chefs, several of them disciples of Roger Vergé and Paul Bocuse. The chefs have brought to the Southwest a true Gallic culinary exercise that would be difficult to find in New York—a terrine of wild duck baked in sherry and served with morello cherries, a silky mousse of sea bass with pistachios served in Nantais butter and onward into a culinary *septième ciel*. With all that Gallic folderol one can still engage lodging here for $87 double, $72 single. Try to find prices like that in Paris.

No one need come down with scurvy over at the Hyatt where T.J. Peppercorn's rotisserie specializes in duck finished with a choice of six sauces including honey with amaretto and macadamia nuts. Or just plain and crispy. Hyatt's Regency suites come with velvet robes, a profusion of soaps, creams, and perfumes, and a tot of liqueur and a mint on the bed table. Nirvana in the sky.

Feeding the muse is not overlooked in Houston, and it is interesting to note that the works of Frederic Remington, that eminent reflector of the West, have been relegated to the basement of the Museum of Fine Arts. At the entranceway of its Mies van der Rohe building is its newest acquisition: four sculptures of human backs by Henri Matisse. The Beck collection of Impressionists and post-Impressionists is a vast treasure.

Houston's most moving artistic experience may well be the Rothko Chapel, an octagonal oasis of repose in a plain brick Philip Johnson-designed building adjoining the quietude of the campus of St. Thomas University. The meditative and religionists of all faiths flock to it.

The handiest hostelry to this cultural cluster is the seasoned Warwick. Bob Hope has called the view from its presidential suite to the parklands below and the small Arc de Triomphe on which the equestrian statue of Sam Houston reposes one of the most engaging views from any room in hoteldom.

The Johnson Space Center, the 1,600-acre homeland of NASA, lies 25 miles from town. Its exhibits of space shuttles, Saturn rockets, Apollo capsules, and moon rocks draw over a million visitors a year.

Wonders never cease in Houston. Considering all the adrenalin that's being pumped here by Buffalo Bayou, it's no wonder that the first astronauts to escape to the absolute repose of the moon labeled their lunar patch Tranquility Base. ■

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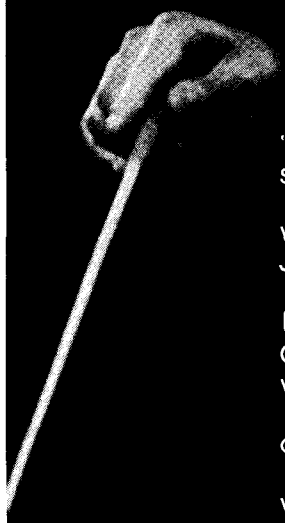
Somogi Onstage

PBS
Monday, April 6
9:30 P.M. EST
8:30 Central*



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Tom Wolfe

by Joshua Gilder

Interrupted in the midst of finishing his new book, Under the I-Beams *(to be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux next fall), Tom Wolfe answers the door in his work clothes—a powder-blue suit, high tab collar ("I feel one should suffer for style"), flat-yellow tie, broad blue-and-white striped shirt complimented nicely by the blue piping running up his white socks, and glossy yellow shoes. The total effect is nothing less than. . . well, beautiful. Wolfe the renegade dandy has exacted his share of critical howls with devastating critiques of New York high society's flirtation with radical politics ("Radical Chic"), the soporific prose style of* The New Yorker *("Tiny Mummies"), and the theoretical contortions of contemporary art* (The Painted Word).

When not satirizing the social scene, the chief banner-waver of New Journalism turns his talents to what he has called "field work among the noble savages in search of a lifestyle." He chronicled the "happiness explosion" of the Sixties in The Kandy Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby, *the birth of the psychedelic movement in* The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, *the society of surfers and racers in* The Pump House Gang, *and most recently the brotherhood of astronauts in* The Right Stuff.

In contrast to his exclamatory, whammo prose, the 50-year-old Wolfe is surprisingly soft-spoken and gentlemanly in manner. We talked in the Manhattan town house where he lives with his wife of three years, Sheila, and their six-month-old daughter.

Q *Tell us about your new book,* Under the I-Beams.

A It's a sequel to the *Painted Word* that will be mostly about architecture, but it also brings in a little bit more about painting, about dance, about serious music, structural philosophy, and other allied arts. I think in the arts and in all matters that relate to the intellectual, we still have a colonial complex. It's always better if it comes from France or someplace similar. It's really very funny. V.F. Calverton coined the term "colonial complex" way back in the Twenties, saying "now it's all over, we've found our own." Except it's utterly not true. Our painting—much that we've gloried in since 1943—will be seen by the historians of the 21st century as a footnote to French Cubism. Of course we have our own moves, but always within the tracks set by the French in painting, in philosophy and literary criticism.

Q *And in architecture?*

A It came directly from the Bauhaus. There's a very funny thing going on right now. The architects, the established people like Philip Johnson, talk about modernism almost as if they had nothing to do with it. They'll talk about "glass boxes" with a snigger. They realize that this is an exhausted form; quite aside from aesthetic considerations. It's old now, real old. But they only move a few steps off from the center track. They'll add an "historical reference," a slightly reinterpreted cornice stuck in always very archly to show it's a gesture rather than a conviction.

Q *It's kind of a comic self-reference, isn't it?*

A It's not meant to be comic. They're quite serious about it; the word that they use is ironic, or witty. But it's dead serious. That's something that is—sometimes willfully—misunderstood about *The Painted Word.* I keep seeing it referred to both by enemies and the few friends the book has as something that seeks to expose the fraud of modern art. And I kept trying to make it clear all through the book itself that it is the very opposite of fraud. You're looking at upland Baptists. You're look-at people who seat the men and the women on opposite sides of the church and have them wash each other's feet out of conviction. They're not going to go through a strange ceremony with the idea of "Oh, I'm going to put one over on anyone who might be watching." And that's to me, the exciting part—that these are *believers.*

The Painted Word was taken as an attack on modern art, an attack on the critics. In fact I don't believe there's a single aesthetic judgment passed. If anyone is implicitly attacked—there is such a thing as an implicit attack through satire—it's the painters, not the critics. It's the artists who were very willing to give up personal vision to illustrate theorems. The book is a history of the rise of theory. And this new book takes that a bit further, in a historical fashion. People in the art world tend to very much resist the type of social analysis they quickly make elsewhere.

Everybody knows that there are forces of class and status that affect businessman, that in some places in history the military have become the tools of economic interests. I try to tell people in the arts that the same sort of social pressures can have an influence on the course of art. They refuse to believe it, but I think that when they unconsciously know it's true, they scream.

Q *The virgin artist complex?*

A Yes. The idea that what comes from

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the artist comes from the Godhead, which is now known as creativity. I guess I'm saying that there is no Godhead.

Q *How have your work habits changed over the years?*

A In the early days when I was working so steadily, the phone didn't ring very much, I didn't have the money to travel anywhere, and actually there was no impediment, no temptation to keep me from devoting every spare moment to writing. It was at the *Herald Tribune* in between assignments—I was a general-assignment reporter—there would be stretches when I was doing nothing, so I would work on an article for *Esquire* and sigh deeply and grumble when the people who were paying me interrupted to assign a story. And I would often start work at night. That's the best possible way to work. Except now, in addition to everything else, I'm married—and I wouldn't give that up for anything. With a family you can't live like an urban monk.

When I finally had to get *The Right Stuff* written, I didn't answer the phone. I had to stuff cotton between the bell and the ringer. See, the actual writing of a book never takes more than six months. I don't care which book it is. People who are working on a book for five years, six years, have often said they're "writing a book." Writing a book doesn't take that long. They're doing a dance around the book. I used to do that myself. The term "work in progress" means "haven't started."

Q *Did you have trouble getting down to work on* The Right Stuff*?*

A Yes, years went by. I was intimidated by two things: The obvious fact that no one was interested, and that I knew the routine in terms of structure was going to be incredibly hard work. No one figure, no hero—there was no Ken Kesey, for example. Through his experience, through Kesey's life and the Pranksters, you could show the heart of the whole psychedelic experience, and the whole religious movement of the Sixties. With *The Right Stuff*, you had to keep filling people in on world history, which seems impossible to do in an interesting manner. It isn't all that hard—once you decide on it, you just tell them.

But it must have been 1978 when I decided I just had to write it. And then came the period of stuffing telephones with cotton. I even got to the point where I wore clothes in which I couldn't go out into the street. Such as khaki pants; you know, I think it's demeaning. I can't go out into the street in khaki pants or jeans.

Q *You own a pair of jeans?*

A I have one pair of "Double X" Levis, which I bought in La Porte, Texas, in a place that I was told was an authentic Texas cowboy store, just before I started working on *The Right Stuff*. I've had them on, but I've never worn them below the third floor. So I put on a pair of khaki pants and a turtleneck sweater, a heavy sweater. When I'm writing I like to keep the room cold—I think between 62 to 65 degrees is the right temperature to write. It's another way of boxing myself in. I wrote that

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and *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* both in the same amount of time. Six months of concentrated writing, another few months for rewriting, checking facts.

Q *How do you organize your day when you're working?*

A I try to set a quota of 10 pages—I triple space on the typewriter. For me it's about 1,900 words. Any time I'm finished with that I can quit. I will quit even in the middle of a sentence at the end of the tenth page. The hardest thing is overcoming the inertia of beginning the next day. If I'm in the middle of a sentence or a paragraph, at least I know how the next day is supposed to begin. And I'll try to do a page or two before lunch. I always get up earlier than normal, but nothing gets done until just before lunch. I do a page or two. At that point I go outside, just walk around the block. I try to get five pages done in the afternoon, so that working after dinner is not going to be too much of a struggle. But I usually end up working late anyway. This is not a very good way to do it. Ideally, as I always used to gather Philip Roth does, one should get it all done before 2 PM. Then the rest of the day you can play tennis, go out in the evening, or whatever you like to do—just be a part of the world.

Q *Do you do a lot of revising or do you write straight through?*

A I usually write straight through. I think it's a good habit to revise first thing the next day. It's much easier than writing, sort of gets you started. The inertia is such a damned thing.

Q *Have you ever experienced writer's block?*

A I have, but I don't call it that. What is called writer's block is always here. It's me-fear, fear that you can't do what you announced. Maybe you only announced it to a few people, or only to yourself. The awful thing about the first sentence of any book is that as soon as you've written it you realize this piece of work is not going to be the great thing that you envisioned. It can't be. That's one type of fear. Another would be not coming up to the expectations of editors, authors, and all the rest. The other feeling is—fear is not the right word for it—despair. The realization that what you are about to do will be worthless no matter how well you do it. That it isn't worth doing. I think we've all had assignments—if you've ever worked for magazines or newspapers—where we have that feeling. Out of economic necessity you say, "OK, I'll do it."

In the case of *The Right Stuff*, it took a long time to do the research, but I would constantly find myself doing other things. Writing other things. That's always a problem, when you write something that's easier than the thing you know you should be working on. I published three books in that period: *The New Journalists*, which I dawdled over for months; *The Painted Word*, which was too long for a magazine piece and too short for a book.

As soon as you've written the first sentence, you realize this piece of work isn't going to be the great thing that you envisioned.

The book *Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine* was made up almost entirely of magazine articles done during that period, including one of the magazine pieces I'm proudest of, called "The Truest Sport," about carrier pilots in Vietnam, and the one short story that I'd written—since college anyway—called "The Commercial." I thought because it was fiction you could do it in a day because you could make it up. I must say I had contempt for fiction as a craft until I started trying to write this thing. I started in on it, and I soon found that to accomplish what I wanted to accomplish was not only technically more difficult than I'd ever dreamed, but I needed to go out and do some reporting.

Reporting is important for two reasons: To give one's work the flavor of life itself, but also because the reporting feeds the imagination. It gives the imagination something to work with. Human imagination isn't that strong; it can't work in a vacuum for very long. Most novelists ransack their lives for that first novel; it might be called involuntary reporting. They wonder why things are so rough the second time around.

Q *John Hersey wrote a piece in a recent* Yale Review *criticizing the New Journalism. He said that it's hard to distinguish between fact and fiction.*

A He could say the same thing about *Hiroshima*. There are no footnotes. To me, it's extremely important to be accurate, because a lot of the voltage of narrative nonfiction is that the reader is able to believe. I think there are very few readers who want to read fantasy. They read novels because they're getting a picture of the emotional life of human beings that they can't get in any way except in the best forms of nonfiction. But if people start to ask, "I wonder if he makes up the parts in between that he doesn't know about," that's when you're undercutting the whole enterprise if you indulge in it.

Q *So you make it a point not to fictionalize?*

A No, not even in the slightest. It's a tremendous mistake to do it. And also it's as if you violated the rules of your own game. There's a great satisfaction in taking the actual facts insofar as you can get them and turning this material into something that is as engrossing as fiction, and in some cases more so, when you succeed.

Q *Often you reconstruct someone's inner thoughts.*

A You have to do it by interview. You can argue that people who can't remember very well will lie. That's a risk. You have to have faith that the writer went conscientiously about doing this—believed his source was leveling with him. We do this in autobiography all the time. We tend to believe that an individual can remember his emotions and report them accurately. We hardly even blink. I feel that in a way the nonfiction writer is writing parts of other people's autobiographies. And what he comes up with should be given at least the credence that we give other autobiographies.

Q *Is there a different mind-set to reporting?*

A Oh very much so. I think you have

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to concentrate totally on it to the exclusion of being civil. That's one thing that's bad about being at all well known and doing reporting. It's not so much that it alters people's behavior around you, it's that they may want to engage you in conversation, and may make a fuss over you when you arrive, which turns your head. You become a guest at the party instead of an observer.

Q *How do your subjects feel? Did you get any feedback from the astronauts?*

A I've had varied reactions. Some of them really seemed to like it, or at least to have said that it's accurate, which means more to me than whether or not they really liked it. Alan Shepard, I know, doesn't like it because every time he's asked he says, "I haven't read it and I'm not going to." John Glenn, who in the minds of reviewers came out worst of the seven, wrote me a very funny, friendly letter. I was surprised, incidentally, that he came off the way that he did. In my mind, I was presenting a rare and strangely colorful figure of our time. It's very rare to see a man in our day—outside the Church—who is a moral zealot and who doesn't hide the fact; who constantly announces what he believes in and the moral standards he expects people to follow. To me that's much rarer and more colorful than the Joe Namath-rake figure who is much more standard these days.

Q *Do you feel ambivalent about "the right stuff?"*

A In the sense that to me it wasn't nearly so important to say "Here is this great quality" as to point out that this is the core of the competition for status that drives these people. It wasn't this great quality that everyone should aspire to. Since then, people have asked me: Wouldn't you say that one can also speak of the "right stuff" in journalism, in the business world, everybody's up against difficult moments; and I always said no, there is no analogy. It involves risking your life in an essentially sporting way. But there's no halo around it.

Q *You mention that you're so soft-spoken. Do you think that affects your interviews? Joan Didion said once that she's so incoherent that people just never take her as a threat.*

A I think you learn to work by the principles of Jujitsu; you know, the Oriental art that is based on the principle of using the opponent's force. (Not to say that all interviewed subjects are opponents.) You use the force of the person you're interviewing by constantly giving way.

There's no craft to reporting, I think. It's all personality, and having some idea of what you're looking for. So I think you have to use the personality you have to advantage.

Q *Do you try to adapt to your subject?*

A No, I used to. When I first started at *Esquire*, I made the mistake of trying to fit in. And given the kind of things I was sent to cover—stock car racing, the Peppermint Lounge, topless restaurants in San Francisco—not only did I not fit in no matter how hard I tried, but I would deprive myself of the opportunity to ask very basic questions that the outsider can ask. You just discover after awhile that people like to be asked questions they know the answers to.

Writing a book doesn't take five or six years. The term "work in progress" means "haven't started."

I first approached Kesey in a blue blazer, white pants, necktie, and so on. Instinctively I began to dress up a little more as I stayed with him, and finally I remember for a good length of time I had a very pale gray suit, stepped collar vest, peaked lapels, and a big, blue corduroy necktie that I like very much. Finally one of the Pranksters, a girl known as Doris Delay said, "You know, you've got on the wildest costume around." The only time I ever got into trouble was when the Pranksters gave a party for Hell's Angels. I was the only person at the party with a necktie on or a suit. And I saw this guy—Pete the Drag Racer they called him—staring at me across the room. I tried to ignore it (these guys can really *stare*). I was sitting on a hassock and I suddenly see this pair of boots in front of me and he says very aggressively, "What's your trip?" I say, "I'm... I'm a writer." "What do you write about?" "Weeeell... Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters." He says, "How does it come out?" I say, "Gee, I don't really know—I'm just getting started." He says, "You're from New York?" I was so thankful that a neutral question had been asked that I said, "Oh, YEAH!" And then I suddenly realized that one of the various mortals that the Hell's Angels had earmarked for extreme treatment—in addition to homosexuals, Communists, and intellectuals—was anybody from New York.

So he looks down and says, "New York's a shitty town." And then it was very quiet all around. People could tell this was a confrontation. And I suddenly realized that everyone was listening to how I'd answer: You know, you can't let yourself be pushed but so far. So my brain's spinning, and I say, "You've got a point there. I don't know why I stay there. . . ." At this point he seemed to realize that he wasn't going to get a fight or at least not one that he could be proud of; so he suddenly changed completely, sat down and said, "I used to live in New York. And there are only two ways to live there. You can live on the bottom floor because it's easy to get to, a little air and space—a garden maybe—but all day long, five flights up they'll throw shit on you. Or, you can live on the fifth floor and throw shit on everybody else, but you have to climb five flights to get there. That's New York." The guy was a philosopher: He had something there.

Q *You've said you're writing a novel. How far along are you?*

A I have to be honest about that. I haven't begun the writing, but I have a working title, *Bonfire of the Vanities*, after this 15th-century Venetian religious reformer, Girolamo Savonarola. He used to go about Venice and have people bring all their vanities out of their houses, pile them in the street and light them on fire. He was quite popular for a while, but ended up being thrown on one of these bonfires himself.... I'm not sure exactly where that leaves me.

Q *Why write a novel?*

A I've made so many comparisons between fiction and nonfiction, I have to see what it's all about. I'll have to box myself in. It's like announcing a duel. After it's public, it's hard to back out. ■

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You don't know me, I realize . . .

But, I want you to have this before it's too late.

Hello . . . My name is Bud Weckesser. I'm 47 years old and I own a small company in Dunkirk, New York. Our phone number is 716-366-8300.

A number of years ago I lived in an apartment in Kent, Ohio. I had no savings and a beat-up old station wagon that still wasn't paid for.

One night my wife and I were playing cards with some friends. Mary mentioned casually that—on our budget—she was sure she knew 101 ways to fix hamburger. That hurt. So I challenged her. "If you'll type up the recipes," I said, "I'll take out a small ad in the National Enquirer and we'll see if anyone will pay $3.98 for your collection of recipes."

I rented a P.O. Box in Kent and placed a small ad. It was surprisingly cheap.

Several weeks later I stopped by the post office. I walked over to my box. When I looked through the little glass window on the door, I almost dropped my key. The box was stuffed—jammed—full of letters. All of them contained checks for $3.98—and they'd come from all parts of the U.S. and Canada.

The next few days were hectic, to say the least. My wife typed the recipes. I had them duplicated, stapled them together and our crude little book was born. But every day orders continued to pour in. And every day we'd bank the money and send out our stapled recipe booklet.

I decided to try another ad. This time I placed a classified ad for some of my beer and wine making recipes in Popular Mechanics. Again, the orders poured in. Over $1,000.00 in just several weeks. And, as our business grew, I corresponded with other people . . .

- A husband-wife team from Santa Barbara put together a booklet about how to "win at card games." It pulled $14,870.00 in just 5 months . . . all cash orders . . . all from a small ad . . . all by mail.
- An Oregon man informed me he had made over $14,000.00 selling his small booklet about getting rid of moles and gophers in your yard. Again . . . all by mail.
- A Maryland man wrote an 8 1/2" x 11" booklet of business advice. So far it's brought him over $140,000.00 . . . all by mail.

Don't misunderstand. This isn't a get-rich-quick scheme. But the profit potential is staggering! An Ohio man I spoke with put a large display ad in a national Sunday supplement. A few days later the orders started pouring in—mail sacks full of cash! Within the next two months he received over $220,000.00 in CASH orders for his $3.00 booklet.

Perhaps you're saying to yourself, "Yes, but this only works for a few lucky people." If that's your thought—and I don't blame you for being skeptical—please try this simple little test. It won't cost you a cent.

1. Go to the library and get some year-old issues of magazines with classified ads—like Popular Mechanics and Sports Afield, etc.

2. Select current issues of the same magazines.

3. Compare the classified ads. Look at the current issue then at the back issue. Note how many of the same classified ads are still running, ONE YEAR LATER. People don't continue running ads for over a year unless they're making money at it.

Let me give you some more amazing facts about this unique little business.

★ You can start at home . . . in your spare time . . . quietly . . . it won't interfere with your present job.

★ You can take out a test ad for as little as $13.50 in a variety of well-known national magazines.

★ You don't even have to write a booklet yourself. I'll show you how to obtain "how-to" booklets at wholesale prices—or below. They're already written, already printed and ready to sell. Even better, you don't have to buy them until you've tested your ad and have the cash orders in hand. In short, you don't tie up any money in stock or supplies of books.

★ You can set your own hours. All you need is a post office nearby.

★ You can deduct up to 33% of the expenses on your home if you set up your office at home.

★ You can travel whenever you wish—or just loaf much of the time. All you need to do is pick up your mail twice a week—or have someone do it for you. You'll open orders, remove the checks (95% of them don't bounce, believe it or not) and bank your receipts.

★ In the afternoon or evening, you can type the labels for the small envelopes you'll use to ship your booklets. Drop them off at the post office and you're done. No bosses, no layoffs, no strikes, no rat race.

I've put all of my instructions—every secret—in a simple Starter Guide. And if you're wondering why I'd share my business with you—especially if its so profitable—here's why.

The range of topics and ads is almost infinite. I won't be competing with you nor you with me. I've got a whole drawer full of ideas I haven't even tried yet. There's plenty of room for everyone.

I'll show you—

- How and where to get national ads for only $13.50 . . . ads you can run month after month.
- How to obtain FREE ADS—YOU PAY ONLY IF THE AD IS SUCCESSFUL.
- How to start with no money in books or supplies.
- Where to obtain hundreds of pre-printed booklets—at super low wholesale prices.
- How to word your ad—I'll include various sample ads.
- How to set up your office in a spare room or basement.
- I'll also include a giant list of "how-to" topics.
- Plus . . . all the sample ads, forms, lists, addresses, and details you'll need to get started within only 10 days.

If you're still skeptical, let me offer you a most unusual guarantee. I'll send you my Starter Guide to inspect. Keep it for one year. That gives you plenty of time to actually try my materials. If, at the end of one year—or anytime in between—you want your money back, just return what I've sent you. I'll issue you a full refund **within three working days**—no nonsense, no delays. That's our iron-clad guarantee.

Also, please feel free to POSTDATE your check THIRTY days. If you're not satisfied with my materials just send them back within 30 days and I'll return your original UNCASHED CHECK.

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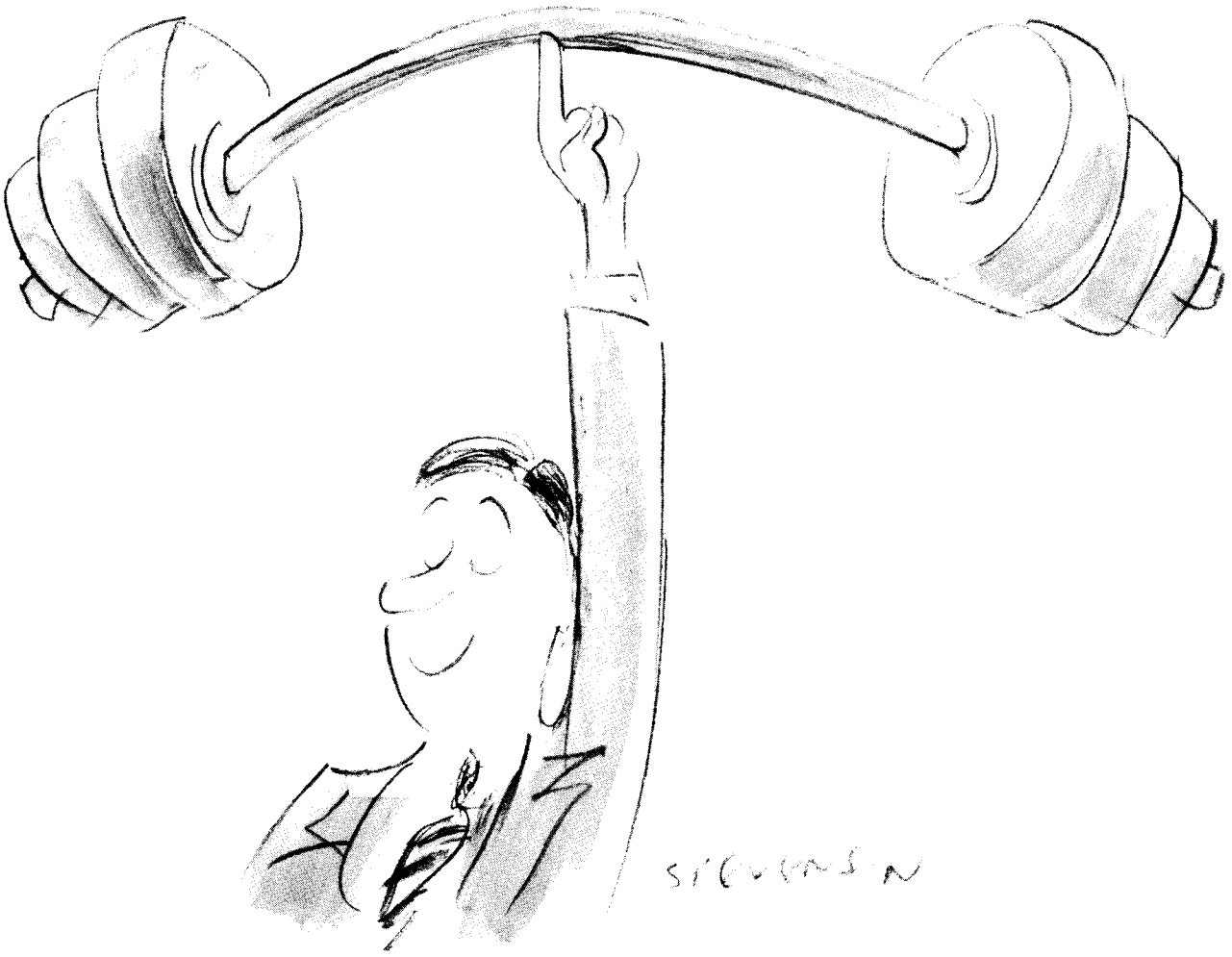

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WEIGHT:

For many customers, Manufacturers Hanover has reduced the number of shareholder accounts by more than 10% – the result of seeking out duplicate accounts the previous stock transfer agent may have entered wrong.

REFLEXES:

At Manufacturers Hanover, shareholder records are accessible instantly. So you can respond without delay to such developments as tender offers.

MEMORY:

Our TRANSIFAC system maintains fully computerized audit controls over all work; keeps track of certificate inventory; and assures control over the production of certificates and transfer reports and the mailing of dividend checks.

POSTURE:

Manufacturers Hanover recognizes that the human side of this business is all-important. Not only will you have an account administrator coordinating all day-to-day tasks, but a backup team of three other officers thoroughly familiar with every aspect of your account. So you and your shareholders always have someone to turn to.

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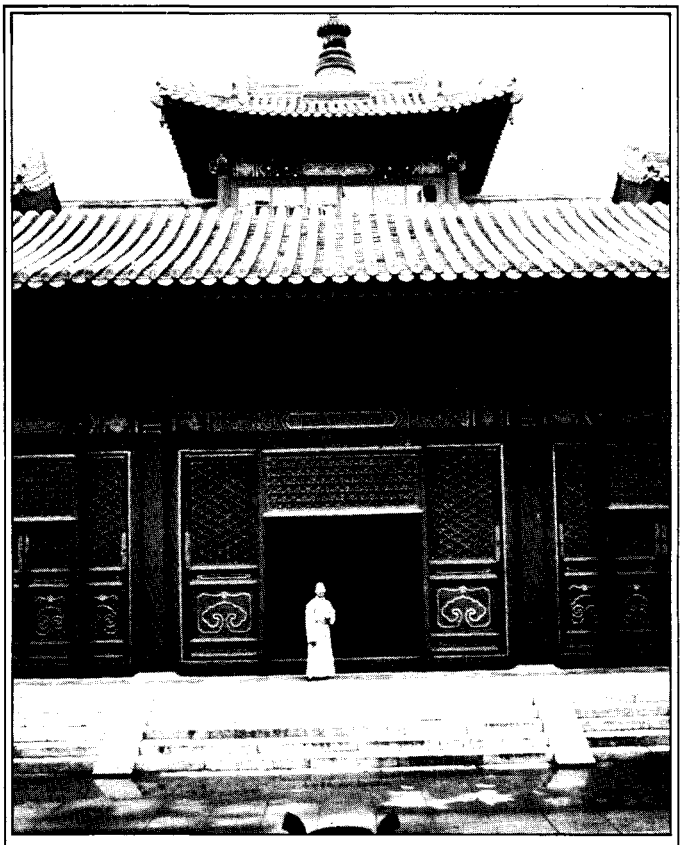
The Pacific and the East

A Traveler's Portfolio

We were at 40,000 feet somewhere east of San Francisco, on the last leg of a flight that had taken me, with a lone stop by the Bay, on an odyssey that had started deep in the Orient and would end in New York. Across the aisle from me in Pan Am's 747 SP (for "special performance") sat a Chinese pilot. The Pan Am hostess attending passengers on the upper deck wore a pin with the flags of the U.S. and of the People's Republic of China, and the word, "Welcome" embossed in enamel.

After a lapse of 32 years Pan Am has renewed its service between the U.S. and the mainland of China with its celebrated China Clippers. It is sending its SPs on its nonstop routing from New York to Tokyo, then flying Tokyo to Beijing (Peking) and Shanghai. Similarly, its California to Tokyo flights will also connect with its new clippers. At the same time, a parallel service has been begun by CAAC, the national airline of the People's Republic of China. Using the same Boeing airplane, it is making weekly flights from New York's JFK to San Francisco, then flying onward to Shanghai and up to Peking. This month it will expand to three flights a week. Already the Chinese airline has all the accouterments, or most of them, known in the West: stewardesses with short, bobbed hair; first class, business class, and economy class; a menu with a mixture of Oriental and occidental fare (stir-fried chicken with vegetables and fried rice topped off by Black Forest cake). It already sports an in-flight magazine complete with advertisements and English texts. Its pilots, like the one sitting near me, fly familiarization flights with Pan Am.



The East is open: The Buddhist Temple of the Lamas, in Peking.

The full opening of China—it will, for the first time, permit foreigners to travel without benefit of a group—heralds a whole new dimension to travel in the East. It emphasizes the proximity of lands that were once considered adventures. Only four years after Lindbergh had spanned the Atlantic in a single-engine airplane, he and his wife, Anne, flew a Lockheed monoplane from Long Island "North to the Orient." Maneuvering by way of Point Barrow in Alaska, and then to Japan, they landed in Hankow, China. It was 1931. Later, Pan Am was to choose an alternate route, sending its Martin flying boats on a southerly route from San Francisco Bay to Manila. Passengers boarded a Sikorsky for the flight to Hong Kong and there linked up with China National Aviation Corporation for the flights onward to Shanghai, Canton, Peking, and Chungking. Three days after Pearl Harbor CNAC flew its last flight out of Hong Kong.

But now it is a new world. China is building a hotel designed by I.M. Pei near Peking. Hong Kong bursts with luxury and with bustle. Singapore, with its reaching-for-heaven skyscrapers, is bidding to become banker to the East. (It is clean, it is green, it is incorruptible, and it speaks Mandarin, giving it an edge over Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong in dealing with the People's Republic.)

All this has brought a new interest and a new stability to the nations of Asia and, in turn, to the Pacific. From tropical Tahiti to the varied islands of Micronesia, and on to the wonders of Japan or Sri Lanka there is an awakened interest, both in the cities, and in newly found resorts, to say nothing of the glories of New Zealand and Australia. Malaysian beaches, Philippine history, and the Hawaiian grand tour, all of that is the essence of the portfolio on the pages that follow.

—HORACE SUTTON

ROLAND & SABRINA MICHAUD 1980-WOODFIN CAMP

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The Bounties of Hong Kong

It was 8:30 in the morning and there I was amid the babble of the King Bun Restaurant in Hong Kong, only 10 minutes from the Hilton. The location might not have seemed so extraordinary except that we were the only Occidentals in the place and I was contemplating a menu that offered braised superior abalone with goose webs and wings, shredded quail with bamboo shoots, duck brain and fish-head soup, braised fish lips in thick soup, and double boiled whelk and chicken feet soup. How to start the day was my immediate concern although I confess to having been diverted—one day I would stun my friends with such an invitation—by the possibility of tendering a civet cat banquet for which advance notice had to be given to the King Bun management.

Perhaps my presence in such exotic surroundings where everyone who was not talking was deep in a Chinese newspaper, might not have seemed so unusual had I not spent the night in, and indeed had only minutes before come from, the unmatched Oriental elegance of the Regent of Hong Kong, a hotel of some 600 rooms that had just opened on the Kowloon side, built at a cost of $60 million, just a block from the respected Peninsula Hotel.

The Peninsula, which had always seemed the sine qua non of Hong Kong extravagance, now appeared, as I looked at it from the Regent, to have suddenly wizened into a relic of some Gary Cooper heyday age, a benevolence of proper breeding left over from some other time, like the Raffles of Singapore or the Oriental of Bangkok. The Regent, on the other hand, is tomorrow's hotel and nothing makes it seem more so than the presence of a handful of rickshas drawn up on the cobbles that pave the entranceway in front of the porte cochère.

Once inside, the visitor skates over a *patinoire* of glazed marble that stretches to infinity—well, not to infinity, but at least as far as the glass walls 40 feet high, each panel 20 feet wide, that separate the lobby and the Harbourside Restaurant below from that endless stream of wonder that is Hong Kong Harbor. Here, under the glassy-eyed gaze of guests gathered in the lobby, or those at table in Harbourside on the floor below, runs a stream of sampans, freighters from faraway ports, boatloads of pigs inbound from the port of Whampoa, ships that began their odysseys in San Francisco or New York, aircraft carriers inbound from the Indian Ocean.

A dozen lanai suites have their own open-air terraces that face the harbor, but at $80 to $100 a day, one could be content in one of the marble-paved upstairs rooms that are each graced with huge sunken tubs, separate showers, private toilets, a spray of orchids, and oils and anointments put up by Givenchy. With a staff of 1,100, there is a room butler for each five rooms.

The Regent is the capstone of the huge New World Centre, a cluster of apartments, offices, and an enormous shopping center which includes everything from a supermarket to automobile showrooms to the Ocean City Restaurant that in its limitless expanse seems as trackless as the Pacific. It will seat 1,000 diners, many of whom come for the dim sum lunch when waitresses patrol the aisles with carts of delicacies. The center also embraces the New World Hotel, a commercial inn (at $50 to $80 U.S. per day) that has its own "Good Morning Show" on closed-circuit TV and a panel board that will do anything but land you on the moon. Its Park Lane Restaurant on the fourth floor imports Belon oysters from Gallic shores, serves lobster in pink champagne, or a *ris de veau* with truffles. Think not in terms of chop suey.

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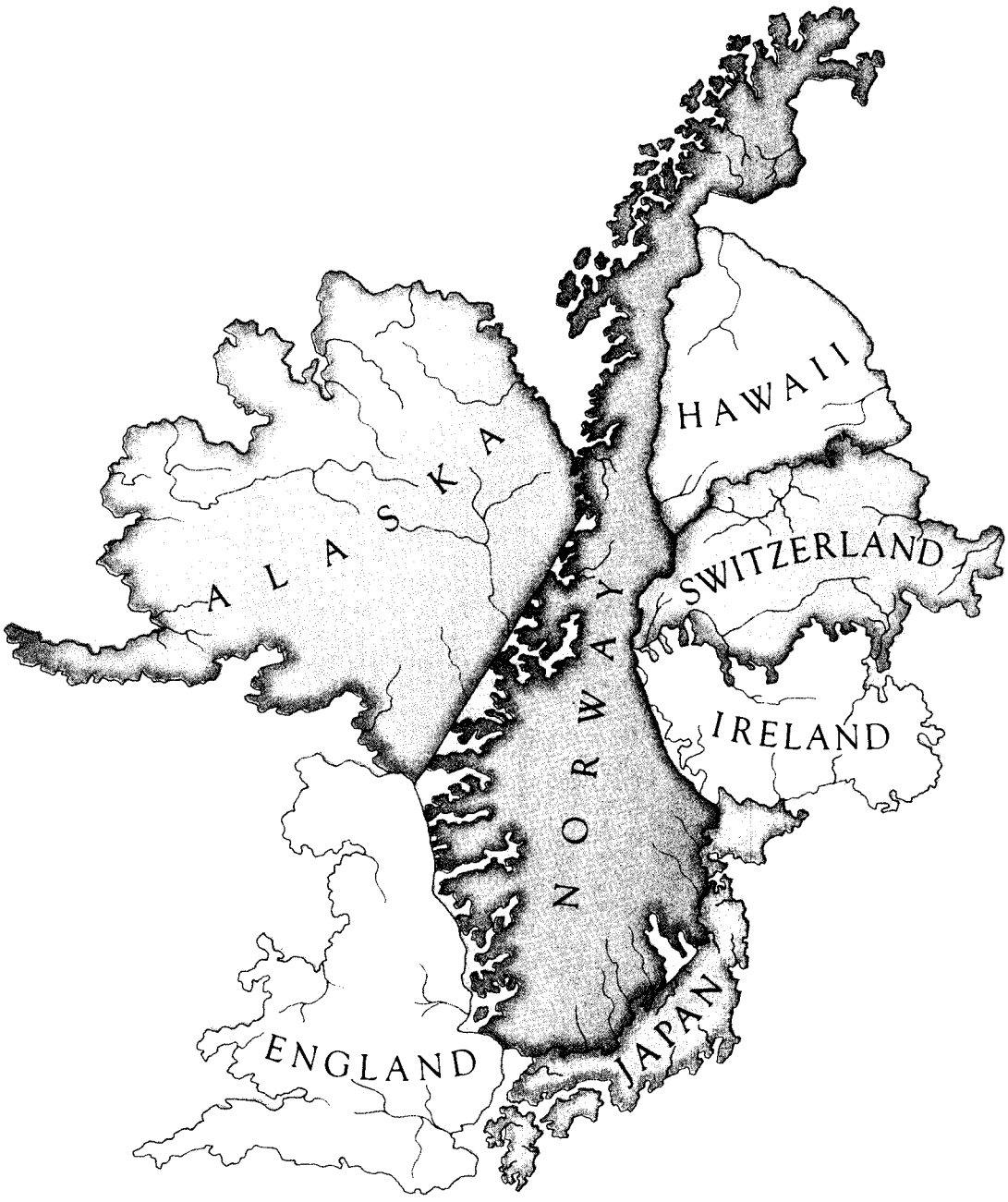

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once its great appeal, that one can be lolling in the marble grandeur of a Regent bath, adrift in a welter of Givenchy bubbles at one instant and in another be off in the Western District gaping at the butcher shops where entrails and steer horns fill a bin, piles of chicken feet, ideal for soup, await the purchaser, as do pressed-flat ducks that look as if they have been run over by a truck, frozen abalone imported from Australia, live roosters, frogs, and eels. Quail are being plucked by the side of the road while butcher boys unload like logs 120 hogs that fill a truck.

One can dally at the snake shop on Hillier Street and watch the bile being removed from a live cobra or krait to be mixed and drunk with rice wine (great for backache). This is the neighborhood of Sam Hing who runs an ivory "factory" and Hing Lee who changes money, both of them near the Sun Fat Trading Company.

In a nonce one can be off to Hennessy Road and enter the rarefied, clublike atmosphere of La Renaissance, there to meet Mr. Philip Wight who grew up in Texas and grew large on his addiction to fine foods and wines. Here amid paintings, paneling, and thick carpets, Mr. Wight has created a new and elegant restaurant that imports rock oysters from New Zealand, serves wild boar pâté and hare pâté, lamb filets with duxelles and spinach in puff pastry, a quenelle of crayfish, and omelet soufflés to be topped off, perhaps with a 1794 Madeira.

At least two new outings available to the visitor emphasize the singular eminence of Hong Kong as a city of stunning contrasts between East and West. One is the day trips now available to the southern tablelands of the People's Republic of China. Though the excursions don't even venture as far as Canton, they afford a startling contrast between the marbleized wonder of the new Regent and the spartan ways of mainland China. The other is the reproduction of the Sung Dynasty Village that has been created in the New Territories of the British Crown Colony.

Sung Dynasty Village is a modest Oriental version of Williamsburg, although here the village and costumed "villagers" are representative of the period from 960 to 1279. Visitors get a book of tickets that entitles them to palm reading, nibbles of sweets, and samples of wine. Bridal processions wind through the streets, acrobats cavort, as do monkeys. Calligraphers swish rapid strokes on rice paper; wine merchants sell clay decanters of wheat wine. There are two lunch tours where visitors are served, Sung style, on small, square rosewood tables in the Restaurant of Plentiful Joy.

That's how it all was a millennium ago before Hong Kong had a Mass Transit Railway—the local term for subway—before it had jetfoils and cable railways, to say nothing of inns with deep-dish bathtubs and a glassy panorama of the world's most unforgettable harbor. Indeed, before it became a city of plentiful joy.

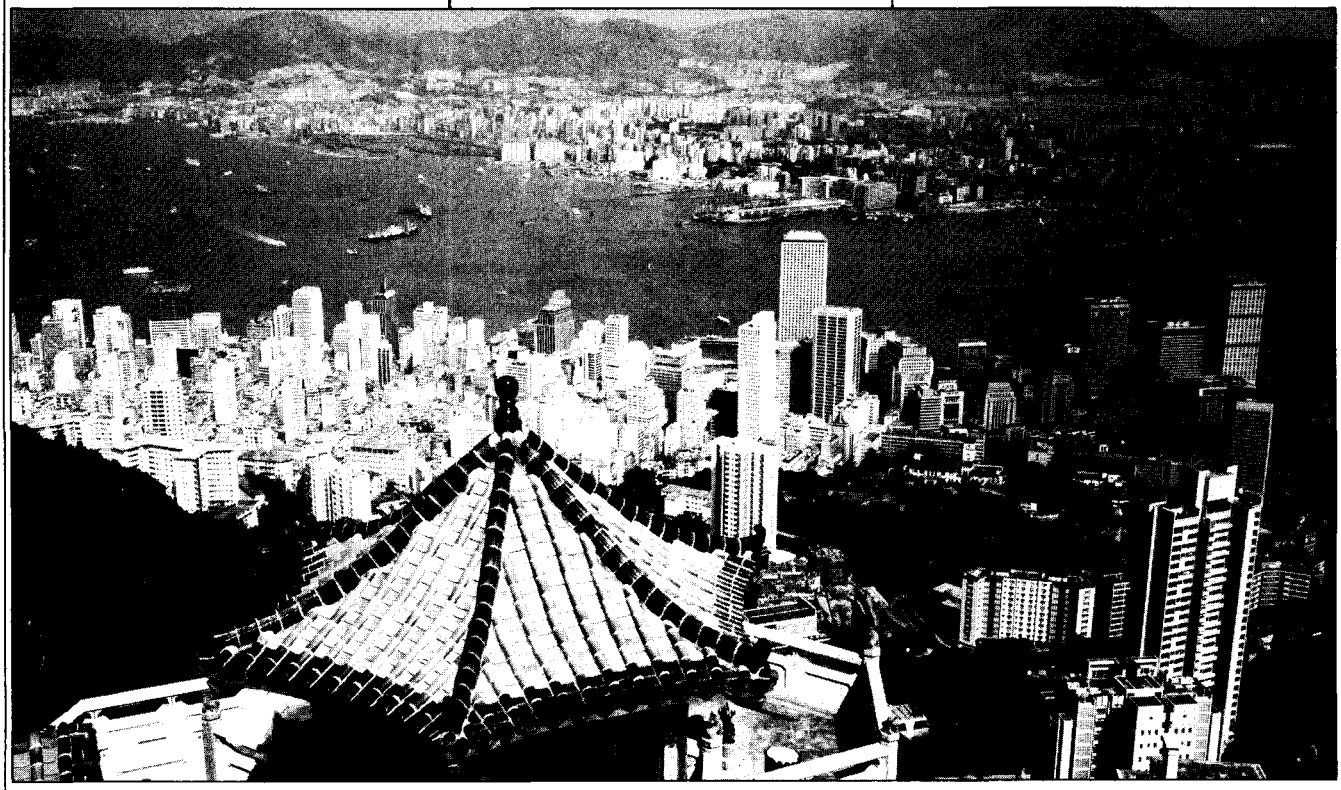
—HORACE SUTTON

Malaysian Idyll

This is one traveler who sees no reason why those on vacation should have to do without superb service, soft beds, a modern bathroom, cold beer, a before-dinner martini, good food and wine. Strictly in the line of duty, many years ago he began skimming the world in a search for idyllic nooks where creature comforts are attended to in places also offering sand, sun, tropical solitude, and exotic sights.

Meeting all these requirements, including accessibility, is the still largely primeval east coast of peninsular Malaysia, connected by excellent roads with Malaysia's capital of Kuala Lumpur, a three-and-one-half-hour drive through the mountains and rain forests, and also with the independent city-state of Singapore, a six-hour drive down the coast, just off the Malay peninsula's southern tip. There on Malaysia's east coast, awaiting the jaded tourist soured by memories of crowded, littered beaches, and commercialized resorts, is a happy surprise—a wide stretch of beach called Kuala Dungun, 50 miles of clean sand bordering the rolling surf of the warm South China Sea.

Along the coast in the east coast state of Trengganu, about 43 miles south of the



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The urban thicket of Hong Kong places grand luxe restaurants and hotels next to the shops of snake dealers and ivory carvers.

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airport serving its capital city of Kuala Trengganu and 93 miles north of the city of Kuantan (both of which, by the way, have splendid beaches of their own), there is a headland called Tanjong Jara, with a view of the sea through the palms, and the island of Tenggol on the horizon. At its base, 80 acres of crescent-shaped white sand beaches and tropical greenery surround a new luxury resort owned by the Tourist Development Corporation of Malaysia.

Laid out as a Malay village around a lagoon and built in traditional Malay architectural style with extensive use of local hardwood and handmade clay tiles, the handsome Tanjong Jara Beach Hotel offers the kind of amenities and service found in the best hotels in the country's principal tourist centers of Kuala Lumpur and Penang. All 100 units, in nine two-story buildings and six bungalows, have an ocean view. All are air conditioned, but many guests prefer to turn on the paddle fans that circulate the sea breezes. A restaurant and lounge overlook a lagoon, swimming pool, waterfalls, and a palm-fringed boating lagoon. Western cuisine and local Malay, Chinese, and Indian specialties are served indoors and on a terrace.

Visitors can spend several days in Tanjong Jara's happily languorous tropical atmosphere taking float trips down the Trengganu River to watch jungle life on the river banks; exploring nearby fishing villages and watching the men put out to sea in fragile sailboats with graceful, curving bows complete with painted figureheads; and learning to appreciate the quality of the region's music, dance, drama, and the native crafts in metal, wood, cloth, and vines. Malay folk culture is at its purest on West Malaysia's east coast.

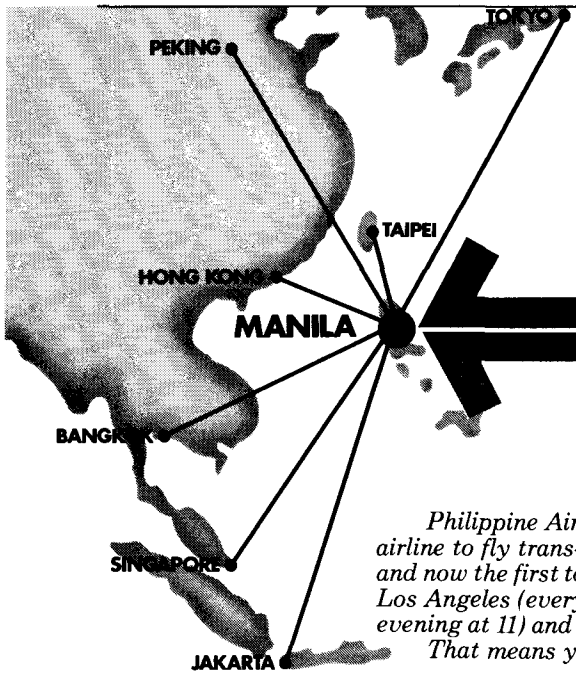
In seaside villages of Kelantan, Trengganu, and Pahang states, visitors can join villagers at a performance of *waylang kulit*, or shadow play, watching the shadows of finely carved puppet figures made from the hide of a water buffalo tell the legends of an incredibly ancient past while the puppeteer, using different voices, acts as narrator and singer and also takes all speaking roles of the characters.

During the breezy months of April, May, June, and July, visitors are treated to the sight of huge, fantastically shaped, multicolored kites, often with an eight-foot wing span and measuring 10 feet from head to tail, dotting the sky and adding music to the wind. Here kite-flying is no child's game. It is a traditional pastime of adults. Most kites are equipped with a fine bow-shaped device that makes a delightful humming sound when the wind passes through it. Sometimes when the weather is good, kites are tied to a coconut tree when darkness comes and left up in the air to make music in the sky all through the night.

The entire east coast area is attractive eight or nine months of the year—don't even consider coming during the monsoon season, November through January and often into February—but particurly during July and August when there is still another reason to visit this corner of the world.

Along the coast five miles north of the hotel is a remote stretch of beach called Rantau Abang. In all the Pacific, only on this small, lonely patch of sand is spawned a survivor of the time of the dinosaurs, one of our planet's rarest species—the giant leatherback turtle that commonly reaches a length of 8 feet and with a flipper-span just as long, weighs up to 1,500 pounds, and reputedly can live 1,000 years.

These giant turtles roam the oceans of the world until egg-laying time, when, driven by instinct alone, they swim back to Rantau Abang, heave their giant bodies up on the beach—an awesome



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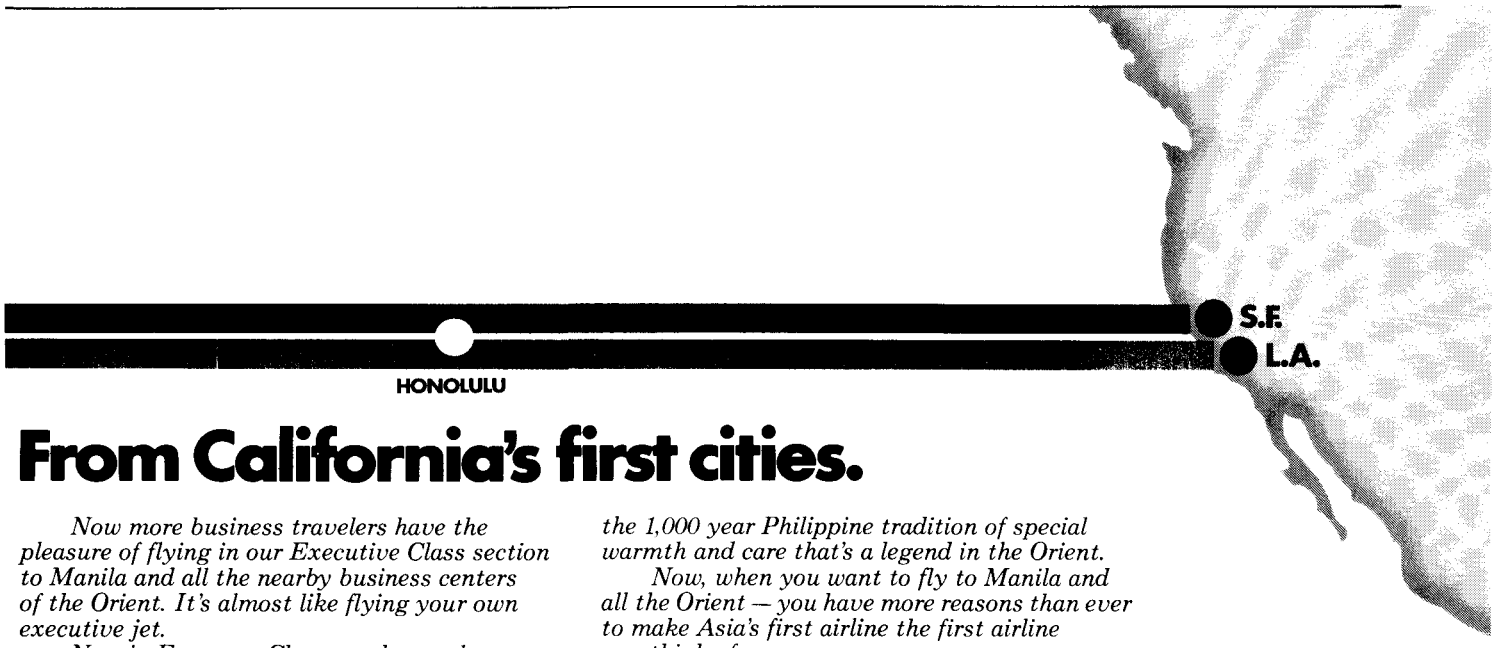
For anyone wearying of Asian urban exotica, the South Pacific islands still offer legendary respites in lush serenity.



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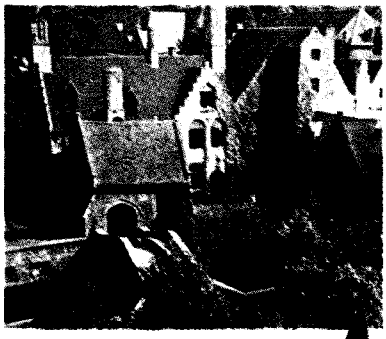

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feat in itself—and lay their eggs by the scores in the sands where they themselves were born, weeping in exhaustion as they do.

The egg-laying season lasts from May through September, with July and August the best months to see them. Eggs the size of Ping-Pong balls are laid in the cool of the night—an average of about 120 eggs per turtle. Tourists can rest in one of the 10 cottages of Rantau Visitor Center, affiliated with the hotel, until boys patrolling the beach spot the monsters and summon the watchers. —KERMIT HOLT

Mr. Holt is the veteran travel editor of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Hawaii's Languorous Lure

For five months the writer lived in Waikiki, and though he loved the beaches, the sunsets, the distant Waianae Mountains, he grumbled about the traffic and the modern pace. And he found Hawaii "beastly cold." That was in 1889 and the writer was Robert Louis Stevenson. Nearly a century later you hear the same complaints (well, the weather is seldom maligned; the tubercular Stevenson doubtless missed the heat of Samoa and Tahiti) and you read the trouble-in-paradise stories that mention declining tourist figures and you wonder: Has the magic vanished?

An outsider turned loose on the still-buoyant Kalakaua Avenue might not note the change, but in a state that relies on tourism as its top source of income, a 0.5 percent drop in visitors in 1980 hit like a tidal wave. It was the first decline since 1949. Most of the blame was placed on the recession and on steepened air fares (the basic California-Hawaii fare *doubled* to $252 in two years), but headlines telling of burglaries and other crimes didn't help.

Yet with all the pressures of an island state grown too fast; with the frustrations of minorities who feel mired at the bottom of the Hawaiian melting pot; with the skyward march of concrete that in places has altered the flow of the blessed trade winds; with all this, Hawaii may still be what Mark Twain called it: "the loveliest fleet of islands anchored in any sea."

Even the maligned Oahu can be irresistible at times. I am thinking of those winter mornings when the mynahs strut on the dewy Kapiolani Park lawn, a pair of snowy white doves takes flight for Diamond Head, and early-bird surfers ride in toward Waikiki on perfect curlers; afternoons when shadows fill the dark green clefts of the Koolau Mountains; early

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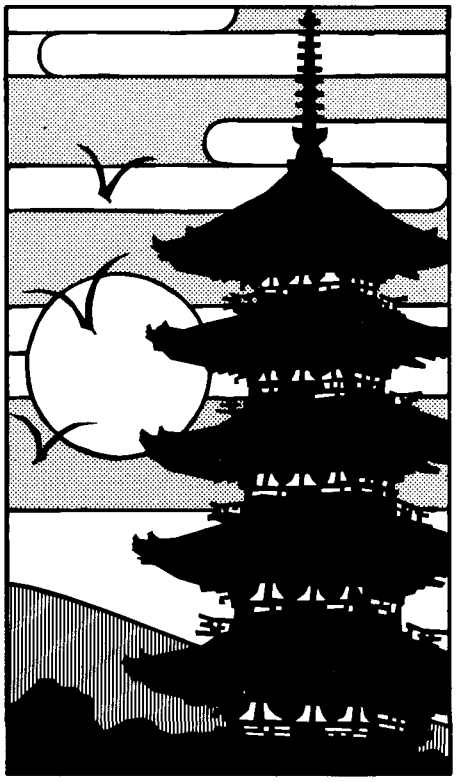

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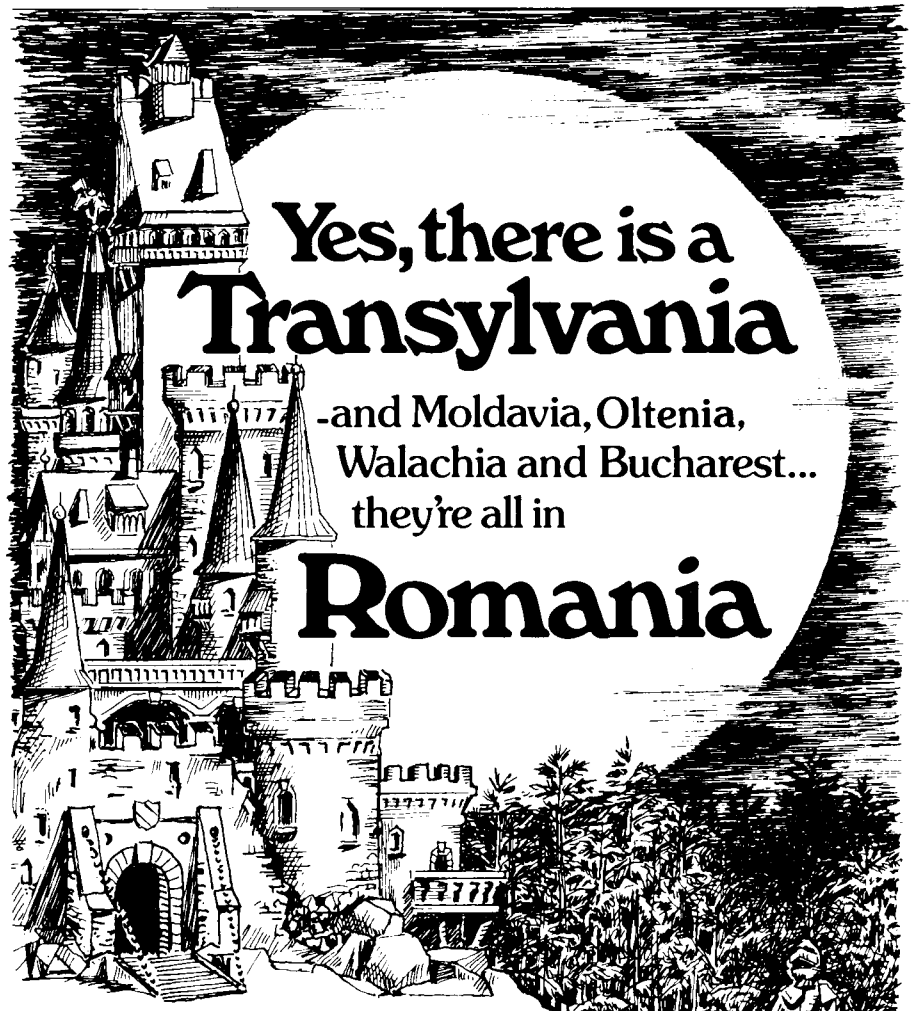
evenings as the sampans and dinner catamarans sail into an orange-sherbet sunset opposite a suddenly becalmed Waikiki. In the late Seventies, through a spate of hotel and condo building, a hard-hat was more appropriate dress than a plumeria lei, but Waikiki and particularly the torn-up blocks in front of the pink Royal Hawaiian Hotel are mostly rebuilt. The Royal, the turn-of-the-century Moana, and the venerable Halekulani (closed for rebuilding) survive in a forest of newcomers, while a few miles down the shore the Kahala Hilton flourishes in a happy Hawaiian vacuum.

Maui is trying to strike a delicate balance between high-rise modernity and stunning natural grandeur. Sometimes I fear grandeur is losing. Nothing, though, can mar the immense, snow-topped (in winter) Haleakala crater, the green-clad Iao Needle, the gorgeous snaking road to Hana. To Kaanapali Beach has come a smashing Hyatt Regency that, with its waterfalls and landscaped pools, seeks to improve on the Maui bounty. Wailea, home of the Maui Inter-Continental and Wailea Beach hotels, has made a believer of one who doubted that a 1,450-acre kiawe patch would ever bloom. In West Maui, Regent International has taken over and spruced up the Kapalua Bay Hotel on a lovely if windy bluff.

Hawaii, a.k.a. the Big Island, at times seems less an island than a distant planet. This is especially true at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park where the 4,000-foot Kilauea still erupts occasionally, instantly selling out the cozy 38-room Volcano House. Kona, on the other hand, has steady hot sunshine, a fading but precious coffee crop, jumping billfish (marlin), limited sand beaches, and black lava cliffs. Up in the cool Kona hamlet of Captain Cook, the old Manago Hotel clings to green bluffs while charging $20 and less for a room. At seven to 10 times that rate you can stay at the handsomely simple Kona Village Resort or the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel.

Kauai remains Hawaii's dreamiest island, and one of Hollywood's favorite tropical sets. *South Pacific* was, of course, filmed here, followed more recently by *King Kong*, *Islands in the Stream*, and *Fantasy Island*. The last time I saw Hanalei—a village, a valley, a river, a bay, and a state of mind on the North Shore—the residents were deciding whether to preserve three quaint one-lane wood bridges or replace them with wider concrete spans that would invite tour buses and other traffic from Lihue. Across the island looms Hawaii's most remarkable natural feature, Waimea Canyon, 25 square miles of colorful, pinnacled gorge.

On Molokai, once you've clip-clopped



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down a 1,600-foot cliff with Tropical Rent-a-Mule, visited Father Damien's leper colony at Kalaupapa, and played the 18-holer at the Sheraton, all that remains is beautiful downtown Kaunakakai. Beneath red corrugated-iron eaves are the C. Pascua store with its bags of mushy poi and packets of preserved Chinese fruits, Oviedo's lunch counter, and Kanemitsu bakery, third-generation bread and cookie specialists. Lanai, largely a pineapple domain, has even fewer distractions than Molokai. If slump has hit Lanai, only the Lanai Lodge would know. It has the only hotel rooms on the island, the only restaurant in Lanai City, and a nine-hole golf course without a greens fee. Come to think of it, Lanai may be the best inflation beater in the whole lovely fleet.

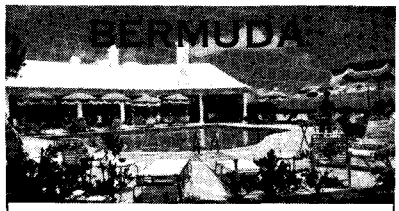
—DAVID BUTWIN

Mr. Butwin is a freelance writer based in New York and a former Honolulu newspaper reporter.

Romance of the Philippines

The white-washed brick mansions lining the streets of Vigan are a legacy of romance. By normal wartime reckonings, this coastal town of northwest Luzon shouldn't be graced with stately homes. The story goes that in the final days of World War II, when Japanese forces throughout the country were ordered to burn and flee, the officer in command at Vigan was caught in a bind between love and duty. The father of two boys by his native-born wife, he asked the local priest to care for his sons after his departure. Guided by divine inspiration, or perhaps mere pragmatism, the priest said he couldn't guarantee the boys' safety if the town were destroyed. The officer ignored the burn order and fled with his men, and thus did one occupation force preserve the architectural heritage of an earlier conqueror—a collection of Spanish-era mansions that gives Vigan the appearance of an outdoor museum.

Most of the houses were built during the 1850s, when suddenly wealthy indigo merchants put their money into elegant homes with *capiz*-shuttered windows closing off the midday sun, ornate staircases rising to high-ceilinged rooms, and burnished floors made from wide boards of native *narra* wood. The best way to soak up this other-era atmosphere is to settle into a two-wheeled, horse-drawn calesa and drive through town to the clip-clop cadence of horse's hooves on cobbled streets. Itself a rem-



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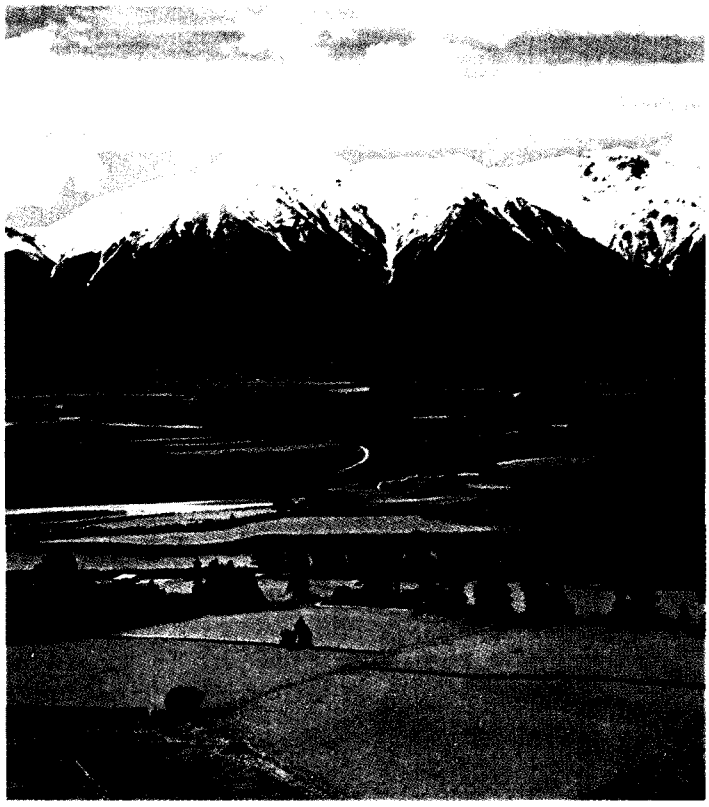

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Travel through farmland, cattle ranches and meadows full of sheep, till you reach the Tasman Sea. Below you, miles of black sand beach stretch out as far as the eye can see. Do it all in a day and return in time to watch the sun set on Auckland Harbor.

Caving and Carving. Drive South, and your first stop is the Waitomo Caves. Now, in a small boat, steer your way into a grotto. Shhh. Above you the glow worms cling to the ceiling, lighting your way like millions of stars. You want to shout. But don't. If you do, the lights go off.

Next stop, Rotorua. The earth's crust is so thin here that steam breaks through everywhere. Geysers shoot hundreds of feet into the air. And mud pools bubble in the ground. You'll meet the Maoris, New Zealand's native people, here. You'll see how they've harnessed the steam to pressure cook their meals, and you'll watch master woodcarvers teach a lost art to a new generation.

You can't resist buying their work.

Finish the day in a steamy mineral pool, dreaming about tomorrow.

On To England. Bright and early, fly across Cook Strait to the South Island.

At Christchurch step off the plane and into England. Paddle a tiny boat along the river Avon. Have a picnic on the bank under the willows and watch a rugby match in the distance. Spend an afternoon driving through flowers. They're everywhere.

The city gives prizes for landscaping, to homes, streets, even factories. And the people are as warm and friendly as their gardens.

Stop at one of the pubs. Chances are, someone will buy you a beer and bend your ear.

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In the morning, you're off to Queenstown, ready to try "the most beautiful flight in the world." Twenty minutes in the air brings you to the world's most stunning sight. Milford Sound. Take a cruise between towering mountain walls through a fjord that impresses even the Norwegians.

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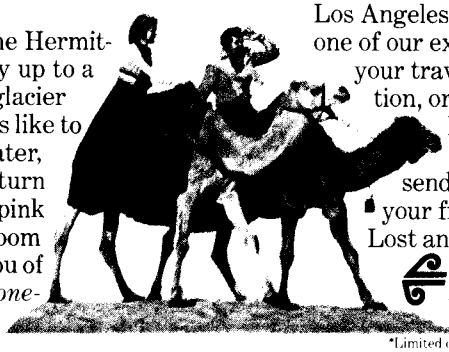

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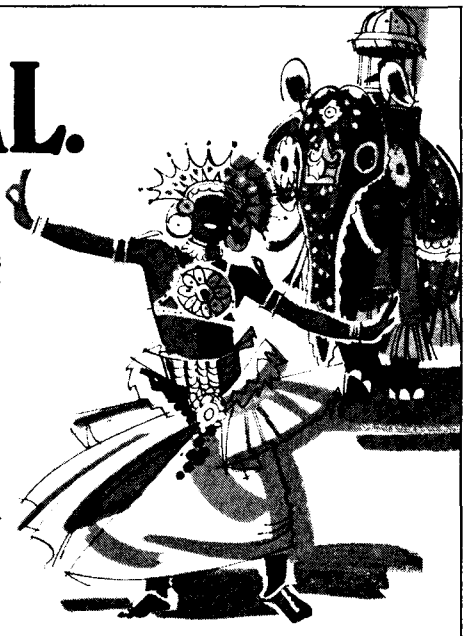

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For more information, see No. 21 on page 74

nant of colonial days, the calesa is still a primary means of transportation around Vigan, and a tranquil complement to the town's buzzing Hondas and put-put tricycles. For a few cents, you can hail a calesa at the central square for a ride through the streets.

Of several historic buildings on the square, the baroque 17th-century San Pablo Cathedral stands at one end, its bell tower placed a bit apart in the configuration typical of northern Philippine churches. Nearby is Burgos House, birthplace of the martyr-priest Jose Burgos, slain in 1872 with two fellow clerics for upholding the rights of the Filipino clergy to enjoy equal status with their Spanish counterparts. A branch of Manila's Ayala Museum, Burgos House holds a prize collection of 14 paintings recording the Basi Revolt of 1807. Produced in 1827 by the artist Villanueva, the pictures show the feisty locals protesting the Spanish monopoly on *basi*, a wine brewed from sugarcane and still a favorite drink. The dining room of the house is set for a meal, as though the family were about to dine, and a bedroom holds the priest's four-poster bed.

Vigan also supports several cottage industries. Round clay jars clutter the yard of a pottery works, and inside the dimly lighted tin-roofed shed, potters give form to clumps of local clay on hand-turned wheels. In the roadside cottages of a weaving compound, husbands, wives, and grandmothers take turns at the family loom while infants and children scuttle about on the floor. Brightly colored napkins and blankets piled on shelves are for sale.

The thrust of Vigan's civic conscience is to keep the town much as it was 100 years ago. The occasional automobile seems like a crass futuristic intruder, and there is no airport where planes disgorge passengers for the "If-it's-Tuesday-it-must-be-Vigan" tour. Instead, you fly into San Fernando to the south and drive up the coast for several hours along roads splashed with bougainvillea, bordered by tobacco fields, and marked by an occasional stone watchtower, once used by the Spanish as pirate lookouts.

You can take in Vigan during a lengthy one-day round trip from San Fernando or else stay overnight. Vigan has a small inn, a colonial-style building with an antiques shop and roof garden. You might also arrange to stay in a private home, perhaps one of the Spanish-era mansions. Details are available from the Philippine Ministry of Tourism, 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90010.

—JANE KEATOR

Ms. Keator, a freelance editor and writer, travels frequently in the Pacific.

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A Hiker's New Zealand

The last country God made on Earth was New Zealand. He gave it a kiss. Fortunately for visitors, this Garden of Eden collection of rivers, waterfalls, and forests, alive with singing birds and mirrored lakes and alpine flowers, can be a reach-out-and-touch experience for those reasonably fit who decide to walk the famous government-operated Milford Track or the privately run Routeburn Walk. Located at the south end of the South Island, each is a guided hike that requires three nights on the trail and covering distances that average 30 miles. Huts are also available for unguided "freedom walkers" who carry their own sleeping bags and food. A small fee and registration with the national park service are required.

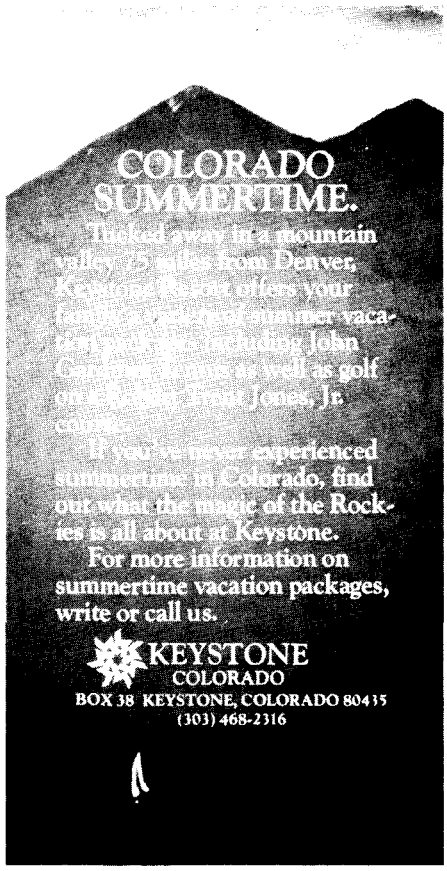
The tracks open in November, New Zealand's spring, and close down in mid April. Because of its popularity, the Milford has expanded its schedule by opening two weeks earlier thereby tempting the late spring snows. But in good weather the Milford Track is a comparatively manicured hike.

Those setting out on their own should carry a lightweight pack with toilet necessities, a change of clothing, and a sleeping bag sheet. A rain-proof parka is a necessity. Blankets, hot showers, and a kitchen staff are provided at every hut. The women sleep in one bunkroom, the men in another. Packs and rain parkas can be rented for a nominal fee.

The Milford Track starts with a boat ride to the tip of Lake Te Anau, the largest lake in the South Island, stretching 33 miles in a north-south direction. At the mouth of the Clinton River you shoulder your pack for the first time and set off on the shortest stage of the track to Glade House where you spend the night. Meals are early and hearty. And fast. Soup, main dish, dessert, tea or coffee—26 minutes.

The next morning the track begins by crossing the Clinton on a swing bridge. A sign reads: "33 miles to go. Good luck." The first day is a 10-mile walk in the park. The track is wagon-wide and softly cushioned with leaves, bordered by silver beech and fern plants on either side. To the right, the clear, green waters of the Clinton River murmur. In the shadows of river boulders you can see giant brown and rainbow trout.

You have all day to go 10 miles with only a gradation rise of 165 yards. A piece of strolling cake. The longer you take the more you enjoy it. Bellbirds trill along the way. The second night is at Pompolona



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There are perhaps a dozen incredible places you must see in the Orient. One of them is a hotel.

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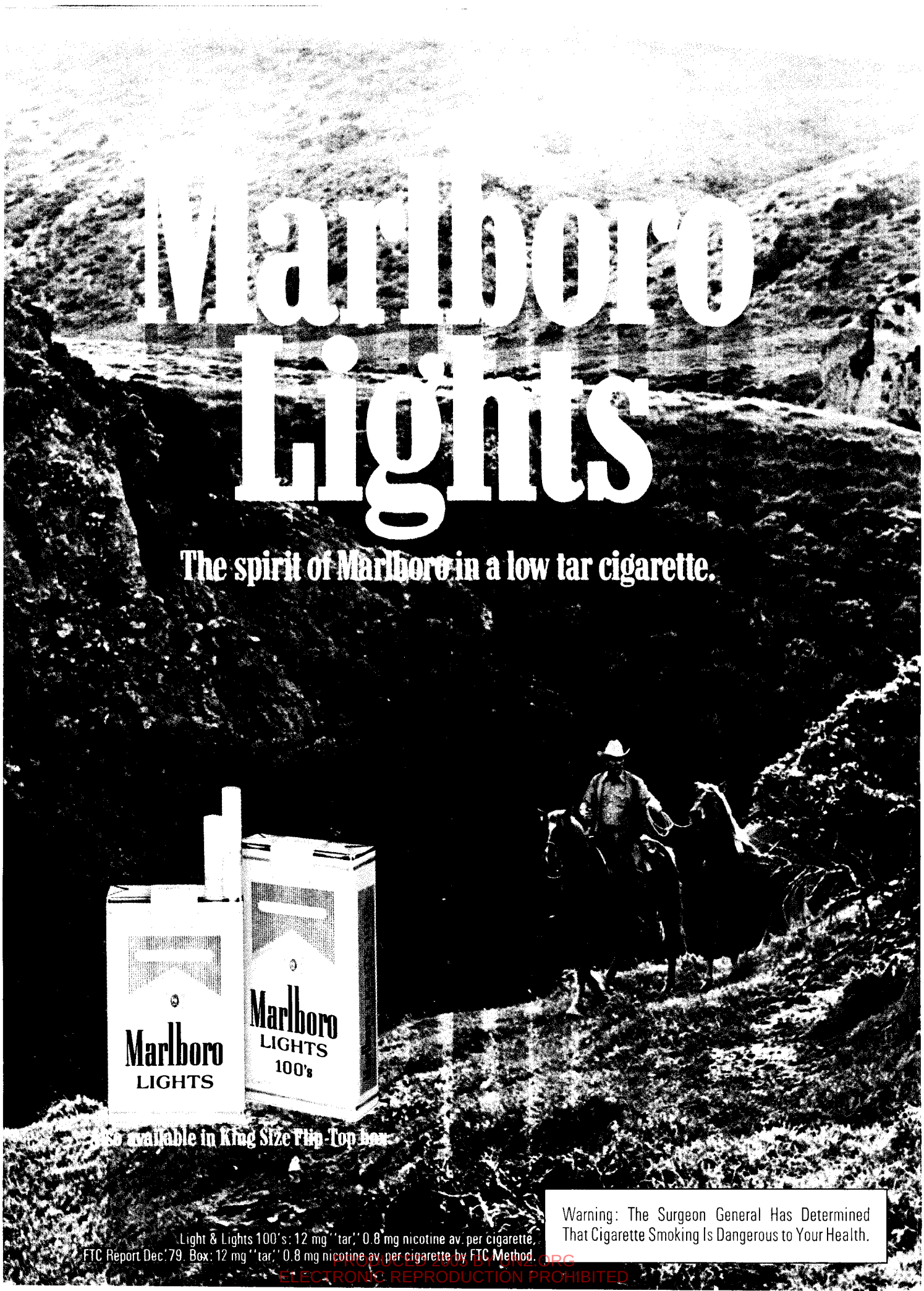
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Hut. Sleep well. The next day is the test.

You'll need the porridge, eggs, bacon, and hot coffee that morning before setting off across the glacier plain to the foot of MacKinnon Pass, and then it is a sweaty, zigzag trail to the summit at 3,850 feet.

The views from the top of MacKinnon Pass are top-of-the-world glorious. On one side you can look down on the Clinton River valley that you have just finished walking. On the other side you can look down on Quintin Hut, so far away! The descent to Quintin on a steep, rocky path jars knees and teeth. It is the toughest stretch of the entire walk. But when you reach Quintin don't crawl into your bunk and sob quietly, but take the side trip to Sutherland Falls, towering, crashing, spectacular, a sight that shouldn't be missed.

That night you ache.

The third day to Sandfly Point is the longest stretch of track: 14 miles. You must be at the point before four o'clock or you will miss the boat that will transport you to the Milford Sound Hotel or Hostel. (Stay at the hotel. It costs a bit more but by now you deserve the luxury.)

The next morning you have a launch trip out on the Milford Sound and then a bus trip back to Te Anau. The launch is part of the package but for some reason the bus is not. Make doubly sure you have your own bus reservation.

There are several minor differences between the Milford and the Routeburn. The Milford parties include 40 people. The Routeburn 12. The Milford is 34 miles. The Routeburn is 25 miles, but there is a two-night stay at one of the Routeburn huts, and your total mileage will depend on which of the many optional walks you take on your "free" day. The Milford costs something over $200; the Routeburn about $140.

The Routeburn is more strenuous and at the same time can be more exciting. We joined an early spring party last December and on the second day made a 100-yard traverse across an unmelted spring snowbank stepping carefully into the preplodded path through the snow. An accident would have resulted in a 1,500-foot drop over the edge of a precipice.

Our first day was rigorous enough. The bus took us from Queenstown to the upper reaches of the beautiful Lake Wakatipu into the forest-canopied lower levels of Mount Aspiring National Park where we were deposited at the "Lodge," an empty, one-room building where we lunched on sandwiches and tea.

The guides were both University of Otago graduates and they were also the chefs and camp organizers. One of the advantages of the Routeburn was the sensitivity and the intelligence of the guides. An intense relationship is quickly established with them and it is reciprocated.

Our first day took us from the Lodge up to the Routeburn Flats, a walk rising about 800 feet over a five-mile stretch that went through groves of mountain beech beside cascading mountain streams. The forests were carpeted with mosses and fern.

From the Flats it was a step-ladder climb, up and up, the Flats becoming smaller and smaller below us until we reached the cabin at Routeburn Falls. The view down the Routeburn Valley was now an airplane-window view.

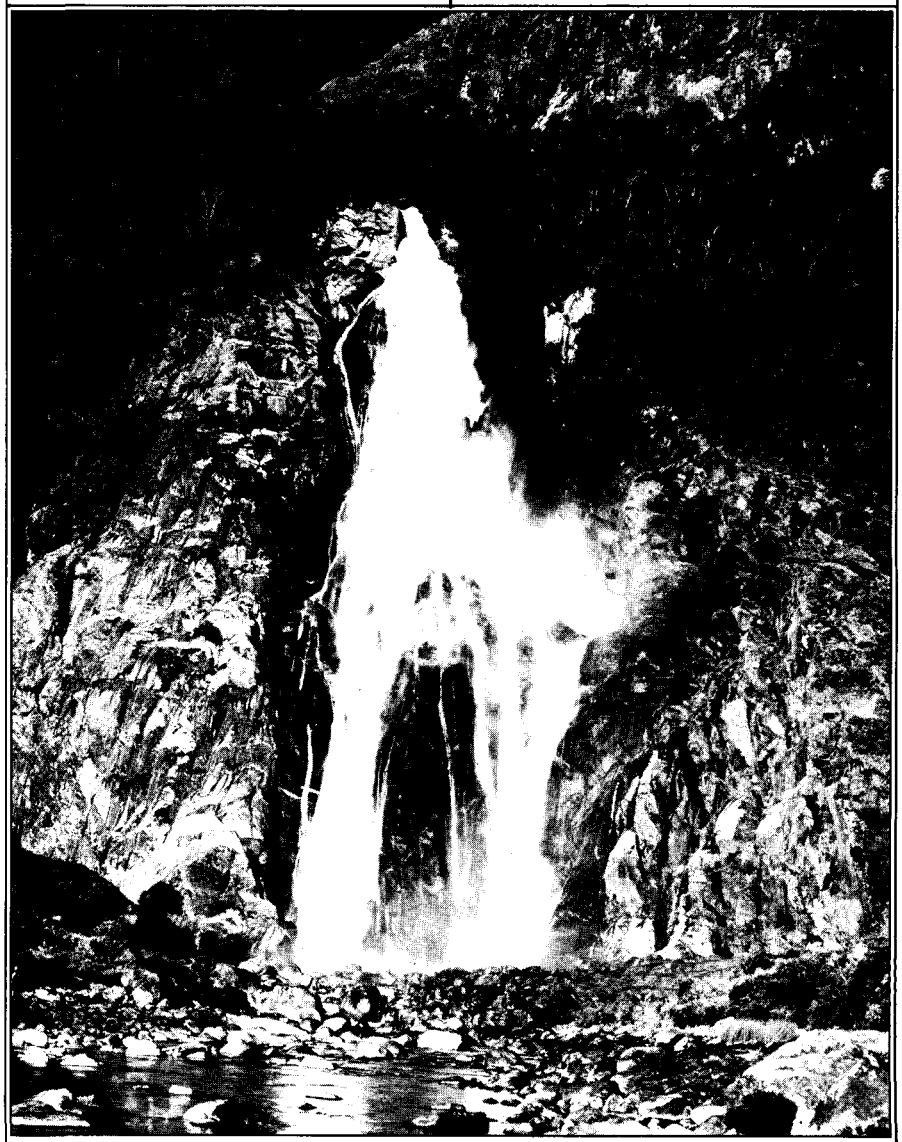
The second day, we climbed through early morning clouds, stopped to inspect the giant mountain daisies just coming out of the frozen earth, made our successful crossing of the snow face, and finally reached Harris Saddle and looked down on the picture postcard blue of Lake Harris.

We then descended over the dangerous Hollyford Face looking down on the Hollyford Valley—dangerous if the wind howls and the weather turns freezing. Fortunately for us the weather was clearing and now the mists started to part, revealing distant peaks, majestic, commanding, snow-covered. The panoramic sweeping views for which the Routeburn is rightly famous became more and more evident.

By the time we reached our destination in the valley of Lake McKenzie the sky was alpine clear. Now we had a two-night stay and a free day to hike around the countryside, up mountains to get better views, and expeditions into the moss-covered forest to explore green-on-green gardens.

The third day we hiked out past the spectacular Earland Falls through forests shaped like orchards, had lunch by the reflective waters of Lake Howden, climbed over the last rise of Key Summit and down to the dusty road that connects Te Anau with the Milford Sound where we caught a bus that took us back to the civilization of Queenstown. —JOHN W. McDERMOTT

Mr. McDermott, an eminent former Honolulu advertising man, recently completed a series of books on the South Pacific.



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New Zealand's Milford Track takes hikers near Bowen Falls at Milford Sound.

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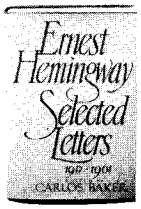
Opening Hemingway's Mail

by Anthony Burgess



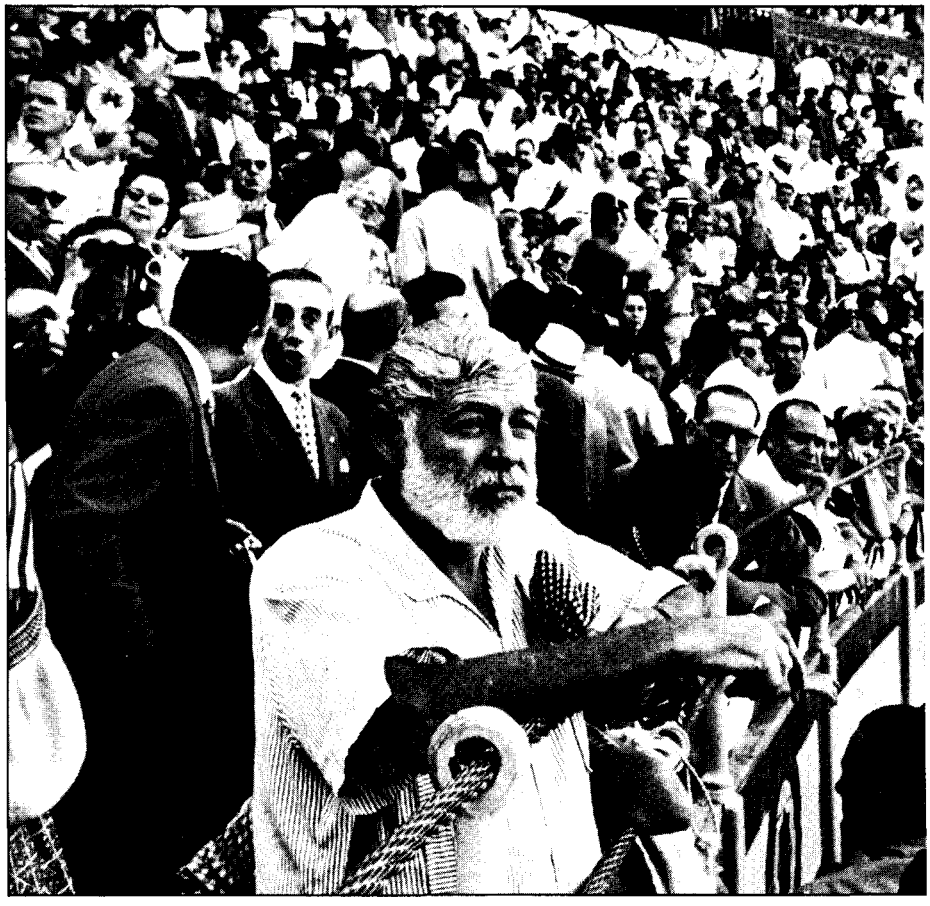
Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961
edited by Carlos Baker
Charles Scribner's Sons
948 pp., $27.50

As one who earns his precarious living by writing, I find the writing of letters—even necessary ones like rebuttals of accusations of libel or plagiarism—a source of chagrin and even guilt, since being a letter-writer gets in the way of being a man of letters. Some authors manage to fuse the opposed claims of letters and letters by practicing what is termed the epistolary art, anticipating the posthumous publication of their collected mail and royalties for their relicts. This entails showing a private face in a public place, which is not what letter-writing ought to be like. Auden wrote a sonnet about a literary man who answered "some of his long marvellous letters but kept none." That seems reasonable, but my heart goes out to the shade of Sir Thomas Beecham, who never opened a letter in his life, unless it smelled of a check.

Reading Carlos Baker's fine biography of Hemingway, I was heartened to discover that there were whole drawer-loads of unopened mail in his various houses. But now I have this bulky selection (selection, mind, not collection) to attest that he was quite as bad as Lord Chesterfield or John Keats or Evelyn Waugh. All that can be said in palliation of his cacoëthes is that old Hem, in writing to his buddies, did not try to write good. Or not often. "Every time I write a good letter," he wrote, rightly, "it's a sign I'm not working." But Baker, who has done the expected fine job of editing here, suggests that "Hemingstein the letter-scribbler" scribbled letters "as an antidote to the concentration of creativity" or else warmed up in the morning and cooled out in the afternoon with an undemanding allotrope of his craft. He was being the athlete, loosening fighting muscles or doing the jog of honor.

"The last thing I remember about English in high school," wrote Hemingway somewhere, "was a big controversy on whether it was *already* or *all ready*. How did it ever come out?" Only once did a regular solecism get past his editors: *A Moveable Feast* (orthography, not title, not book) will infect high school students forever. In the letters there is no tidying up, and there is a free flow that resists all the rules of propriety. Here he is writing to Scott Fitzgerald from Key West, May 28, 1934:

> For Christ sake write and don't worry about what the boys will say nor whether it will be a masterpiece nor what. I write one page of masterpiece to ninety one pages of shit. I try to put the shit in the waste-basket. You feel you have to publish crap to make money to live and let live.... Forget your personal tragedy. We are all bitched from the start and you espe-



Hemingway's letters are "a kind of literature—direct, pungent, idiosyncratic, breathing speech more than lamp oil."

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cially have to be hurt like hell before you can write seriously....

And then blunt words about Zelda being crazy and Scott not really being a rummy. It is sound refreshing stuff.

There will be readers of these letters who will say that he is trying to turn himself into one of his own characters. But it is rather the other way around. All novelists make their characters talk like themselves. What you get here is the undiluted Hemingway voice. You even get what has been termed Hemingway Choctaw, telegraphese worked up into an idiolect. Thus, as early as 1921 he wrote from Chicago to Grace Quinlan: "Guy I usually eat lunch with is sick. So talking to you instead." Probably his most admired phrase was one picked up from an Indian (whether or not a Choctaw has not been recorded): "Long time ago good, now heap shit." There is no attempt to modify the direct simplicities for the highly literate. To Bernard Berenson (Dear B.B.): "Anyway (get out Big Glass) and read it. We all love you very much and let us all go to (I wasn't brave) gether and have fun. God (Gott) BLESS You and our love my true love."

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The Hemingway style is probably the best one for expressing love, whatever Hemingway thought love was. The four wives get good manly loving letters with no Keatsian nonsense. Adriana Ivancich, in the fall days of 1954, when the old soldier needed the delicious incestuous guilt of an Earwicker-Isabel situation, gets things like "Daughter I love you and miss you so much. You know we were pretty good maybe and with things bad we *never* fought." She also gets "Ingrid is the same. Sweet and good and honest and married to the 22 pound rat. This not jealousy. Maybe he is the undiscovered 42 pound rat. He makes good children anyway." The rat is Roberto Rossellini.

Hemingway is fine on commiseration, too. To Charles Scribner he writes from La Finca Vigia (July 9-10, 1950): "Am no good at these bedside letters; but follow the doctor's advice, within reason, and take care of your damn ticker. That's one thing that we have only one of. Max died on us like a rabbit." We all know who Max was. That "within reason" is very endearing. He tells Arnold Gingrich, the editor of *Esquire*, from Key West (November 16, 1934): "That's certainly a hell of a damned disease you have.... I'm damned sorry about it." And, from the same place, a few months later, he writes, superbly I think, to Gerald and Sara Murphy, who had just lost their eldest son at the age of 26 after a long illness:

> Absolutely truly and coldly in the head, though, I know that anyone who dies young after a happy childhood, and no one ever made a happier childhood than you made for your children, has won a great victory. We all have to look forward to death by defeat, our bodies gone, our world destroyed; but it is the same dying we must do, while he has gotten it all over with, his world all intact and the death only by accident.

Hemingway's own death is not directly foreshadowed. But, from Rochester, Minnesota, on December 4, 1960, he writes a totally unnecessary letter "to whom it may concern," exonerating his fourth wife Mary from complicity in nonexistent crimes. As we know from the Baker biography, Hemingway was suffering at the time from the delusion that the Feds and the IRS were after him. "She had no guilty knowledge of any of my finances nor relations with anyone.... She was never an accomplice nor in any sense a fugitive...." Also from Rochester on June 15, 1961, he writes to the son of his doctor, George Saviers, a letter that any sick nine-year-old boy would be glad to receive (the boy, Fritz, was suffering from a viral heart disease): "Saw some good bass jump in the river. I never knew anything about the upper Mississippi before and it is really a very beautiful country and there are plenty of pheasants and ducks in the fall. But not as many as in Idaho and I hope we'll both be back there shortly and can joke about our hospital experiences together." The postscript says: "Am feeling fine and very cheerful about things in general and hope to see you all soon." Fewer than three weeks later he, as Baker puts it, "unlocked the basement storeroom, chose a double-barreled Boss shotgun... pressed his forehead against the barrels, and blew away the entire cranial vault."

One must always ask the question, when confronted with a hefty sack of letters from a writer who wrote good but not perhaps enough, whether we would give up the letters for another, real book. I have always said that I could do without Shakespeare's *Sir Thomas More* or *Love's Labour's Found* if I could see one of his laundry lists, let alone a yearning epistle to Mistress Hathaway. With this Hemingway tome I have no regrets. That he possibly wrote enough (though not perhaps enough in his best years) is attested by the wretched *Islands in the Stream*. The letters, since they essay no literary effects, are all the more a kind of literature—direct, pungent, highly idiosyncratic, and breathing speech more than lamp oil. The character who emerges is the one we already know—sweaty and in shorts and cussing readily—but there is no new and unexpected qualification (secret paedophilia or bookishness). The Hemingway of the letters is almost totally likable. Or likeable. ■

Anthony Burgess is the author, most recently, of *Earthly Powers*.

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A Moscow Mystery

by Ken Follett

Gorky Park
by Martin Cruz Smith
Random House
384 pp., $13.95

The publisher is calling *Gorky Park* a suspense thriller, but in fact it is a mystery. I know how this kind of mislabeling happens. The editor says: "This is a really good, unusual mystery and I want to print 100,000 copies." To which the marketing director responds: "Jeez, nobody buys mysteries, we better call it a thriller."

He has my sympathy but not my assent. Mysteries are about *understanding*; thrillers are about *winning*. In a mystery you are never really sure who the villain is or what he is up to until the end of the book (and sometimes not even then if you have not read carefully). In a thriller you usually know what the villain wants and how he plans to get it. Often you know perfectly well how the story will end—Germany will lose World War II, de Gaulle will not be assassinated, New York will not be destroyed by the nuclear device in the closet in the Pan Am Building. The tension comes from trying to figure out how the hero will avert disaster and survive. The task of the mystery-writer is to make you share a detective's curiosity, whereas the thriller-writer must make you share a hero's fear.

Of course many stories weave back and forth across the borderline. A common formula is the story that begins as a mystery, with someone wondering "What the hell is going on around here?" then half way through turns into a thriller when he finds out exactly what is going on and subsequently does his damnedest to put a stop to it.

Gorky Park stays firmly on the mystery side of the line. The detective—Chief Investigator Arkady Renko—plays his cards so close to his chest that you are never sure what he is after. You never see the story from the point of view of the bad guys, and you never know in advance what they will do.

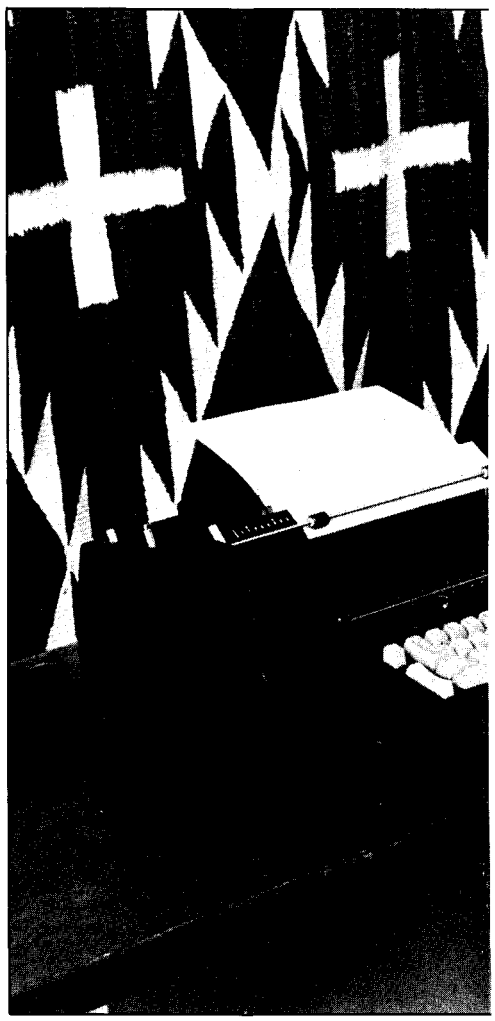
It has many other standard elements: a disillusioned, brilliant detective with a ruined marriage; a rich, perfectly groomed protagonist; a corrupt and obstructive bureaucracy; and a girl who is by turns suspect, hostile witness, and loving collaborator.

Nevertheless it is a highly distinctive mystery, miles ahead of the pack, and given some promotion it should reach and please the wider readership which that marketing director is after. There are two reasons for this. One is simply that Martin Cruz Smith is a most enjoyable writer. The other is that *Gorky Park*, like all the best mysteries, works as a novel.

Smith has a delightful turn of phrase. He says of a frightened Jewish surgeon in Moscow: "He held his emotions like gold in a fist." He renders gruesome police-procedural detail with just the right humanizing, comic touches. Here is detective Arkady in the mortuary with the pathologist Levin:

> Beauty lay on the autopsy table.
>
> "Andreev will want the neck, too," Levin said.
>
> The pathologist put a wood block under the neck, making it bow up, and pulled back the hair. With a rotary saw he sliced through the bones. The smell of burning calcium spread. Arkady had no cigarettes; he held his breath.
>
> Levin cut under the seventh cervical vertebra along the angle of the vertebra's spur. As bone separated, head and neck rolled off the table. Arkady reflexively caught the head, and as quickly put it back. Levin switched off the saw.
>
> "No, Investigator, she's all yours now."
>
> Arkady wiped his hands. The head was thawed. "I'll need a box."

Change the names to Carella and Kling and this scene might be taken from an 87th Precinct mystery by Ed McBain. It would be harsh to call Smith an imitative writer, but it must be admitted that he is cheerfully derivative. (His last novel, *Nightwing*, was a



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foray into Stephen King territory.) In my opinion there is nothing wrong with that. Still, Smith is up to much more than mystery-writing here. He has ripped all of these unidentified corpses, pathologists, reluctant witnesses, tough cops, and smooth villains out of their usual urban-American context and transplanted them into the USSR. Central Park becomes Gorky Park, dope dealers become icon smugglers, FBI interference becomes KGB interference, subway advertisements become revolutionary mosaics, and a cop who knows too much is fired for revisionism instead of incompetence.

The book really hits its stride when investigator Arkady discovers that one of his suspects is a New York homicide detective. Here is the American, Kirwill, sparring with Arkady:

"Maybe I ought to defect. I could be a f------ superman around here," Kirwill said.

"That was a good idea, those other bloodstains," Arkady tried to concede graciously.

"How did you get that cut over your eye? Where did you go last night after we left the bar?"

"I went back for a piss and fell down the hole."

"I can kick the answer out of you."

"What if you broke a toe? You'd be kept in a Soviet hospital until it was healed—six weeks at least. At no cost, of course."

It is the way Smith plays with the differences and similarities between East and West that gives the book its distinction. Now, if you sat down to write a straight novel "about" life in the Soviet Union you would be in grave danger of producing something didactic and boring that nobody would read, because a novel must be first and foremost "about" a person. Smith places in center-stage a human being struggling with a concrete problem, and then he is able, as if incidentally, to light up all aspects of life under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

When this realization dawns on you as you read *Gorky Park* you understand why he has used so many regular mystery-story devices. The mystery, like the western, is part of our standard-issue cultural equipment, familiar to almost everyone, along with the rhyming couplet and the 12-bar blues. We *know* that the suntanned WASP in the cashmere topcoat will turn out to have blood on his hands; we *know* the inscrutable chief prosecutor must be playing a game of his own; *we know* that sooner or later the detective will get to punch his wife's lover in the nose.

This predictable framework throws into sharp relief what is unexpected and unfamiliar, those aspects of life that are intriguingly different in the USSR: just how Communist Party control works; what it is like to get a divorce in Moscow; whether an innocent man accused of a crime has any real chance of getting socialist justice; how an honest Joe can make a buck.

These descriptions are more than merely diverting. After all, we're told that global politics is basically a contest between Our Way of Life and Theirs, but most of us do not really understand Their Way of Life. A nonfiction book like Hedrick Smith's *The Russians* gives us a lot of information but we need the sympathetic imagination of a novelist to tell us what it feels like to be a human being in the Soviet Union. Sadly, popular novelists have so far done little to enlighten us, preferring, out of intellectual laziness, to take their picture of Russia and the Russians straight out of George Orwell's *1984*.

Martin Cruz Smith is certainly not lazy. *Gorky Park* is good entertainment and has intelligent and illuminating things to say about a subject of importance. I should like to think that this is what popular literature is all about. ■

BOB ADELMAN

Martin Cruz Smith's *Gorky Park* works as a novel, like all the best mysteries. It is miles ahead of the pack.

Ken Follett is the best-selling author of *Eye of the Needle*, *Triple*, and *The Key to Rebecca*.

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Visions in the Wilderness

by Jan Morris

Sand Rivers
by Peter Matthiessen
The Viking Press
240 pp., $19.95

In Tanzania, south of the railway the Chinese have built from Dar-es-Salaam to the Zambian frontier, north of the Mbungu country, there lies the Selous Game Reserve, named for the great hunter Frederick Selous, established by the British during their mandatory rule of Tanganyika, and now the biggest, wildest, and least-known animal sanctuary of all Africa. The Selous is larger than Maryland, nearly four times as large as the Serengeti, and most of it remains to this day virtually unknown to human beings.

Into this remarkable geographical anachronism, this epitome of the organic ideal, there went in August 1979, as a member of a small safari, one of the human race's most meticulously processed representatives, the writer Peter Matthiessen, whose every word is refined, whose ideas have been sieved through countless layers of dialectic, and whose very emotions (or so it seems from his writing) are subject to stringent moral and intellectual analysis.

With him too went Brian Nicholson, self-nicknamed Mister Meat, a former game warden of the Selous and *homo sapiens* of a very different kind, who smoked too much, who clacked his false teeth, who had shot 1,300 elephants in his time, who made naughty racist jokes and perpetuated discredited colonialist attitudes.

The confrontation between these three doughty imponderables—Nature in the Raw, Award-Winning Author, Old Meat Man—provides the theme of *Sand Rivers*, a book that looks at first like just another ecological travel-tract, but is actually a cunningly planned, and movingly resolved, sort of allegory.

The book starts appallingly, after a first paragraph that might have been composed by Johnboy to conclude an episode of *The Waltons*. Improbably inspired by a young British Member of Parliament, Tom Arnold, Matthiessen and the celebrated wild-life photographer Hugo van Lawick join a small expedition into the Selous under the leadership of Nicholson, who left Tanzania after independence and now flies airplanes in Kenya. It would be, said Arnold, who is also a theatrical producer, "the last safari into the last wilderness." That dread phrase sets the tone of the book's beginning, and will send the *aficionado* of these texts stumbling dispiritedly along the long, long trail of Last Safaris, across the successive borders of Last Wildernesses, all the way back to Alan Moorehead's original zoological exploration of East Africa, *No Room in the Ark*, which first pricked the ecological conscience 30 years ago.

It is almost *déjà vu* at first. There waits the statutory Baron (no East African animal book is complete without its European nobleman). There stalks the compulsory eccentric (Nicholson was not only direct successor to the unspeakable snake-man C.J.P. Ionides, the real creator of the Selous, but also his frank disciple). The photographs are, as usual, marvelous. The obligatory references to the Leakey family are properly in place. The porters perform their *ngoma* dance as they have in every East African book since *How I Found Livingstone*.

What is worse, Matthiessen takes an *age* to assemble this dire *mise-en-scène*. Before we even light the campfires we have to learn all about Tom, Ken, Rick, Maria, and Philip—how Brian met Melva in the first place, why David has not arrived yet, what happened to the previous owner of Karen's car (eaten by lion), where the Nicholsons' married daughter is living now (Bangkok).

Matthiessen is not one for elisions, still less for snap judgments. He may be able to sum up young Philip, summer-camp style, as "a likeable blond boy and fanatical fisherman," but it takes him a long, long time to decide what he feels about Brian Nicholson.

Here the allegory creeps in. Nicholson is a bitter man, it appears, cynical about all forms of progress. He carries a rifle at all times in case some bloody animal jumps him, views Tanzanian independence with mordant skepticism, would decidedly not vote in favor of ERA, and seems to take conscious pleasure in offending people of more tender sensibilities.

Matthiessen, on the other hand, might have been bred by Sierra Club out of Friends of the Earth, with midwifely encouragement from *Roots*. He is firmly on the side of everything good, like wildernesses, women, and black Africans. He is horrified at the idea of taking a gun to go *bird-watching*, and wants only to think the best of everyone, beast or man, black or white.

But oh, what problems of morality and interpretation beset the kindly ecologist in incorrigible old Africa! The very nature of innocence is at risk! When is a tourist not a tourist? When is a poacher not a hunter? Is the culling of thousands of elephants in the interests of conservation morally more justifiable than the murder of thousands of rhinos in the pursuit of aphrodisiacs? Is an animal of an Endangered Species more precious in the sight of God than a

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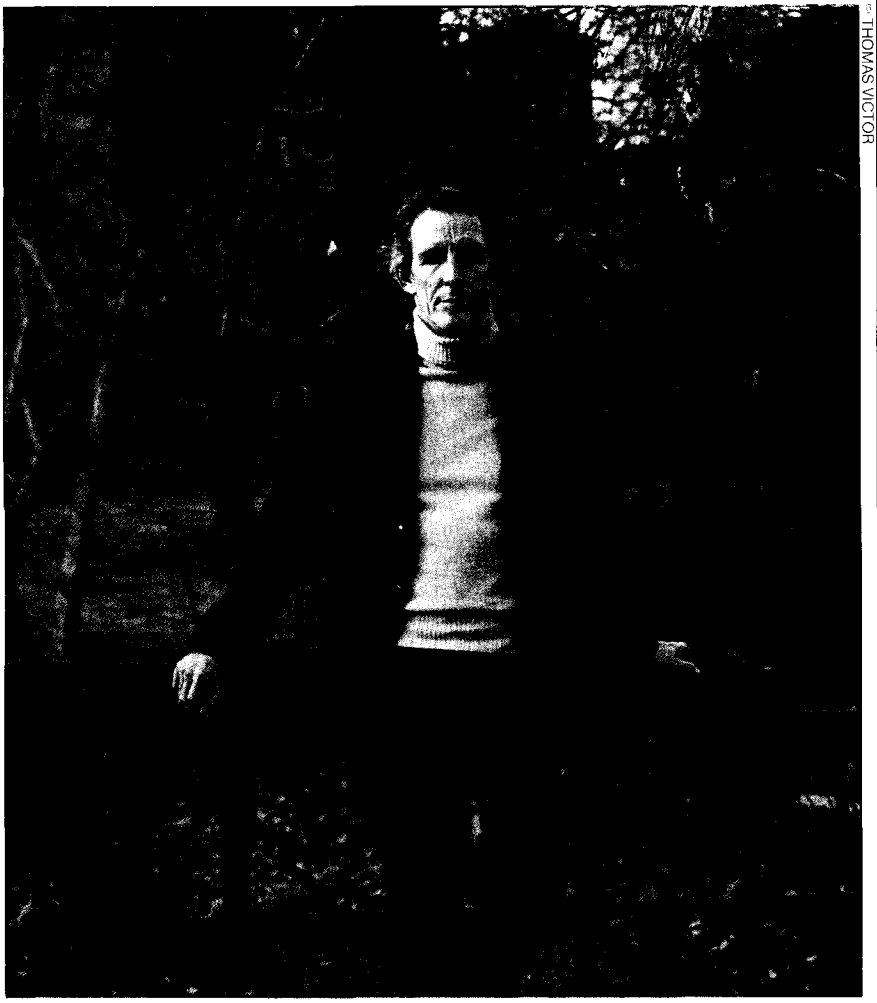
poor run-of-the-mill warthog?

Then again, is there not an ethical ambiguity to the very idea of artificial wildernesses in a world so short of food and living space? Should the Ngindo really be prevented from earning a decent living out of ivory tusks, or eating a nourishing Selous buffalo now and then? What about Nicholson's dictum that "out in the bush, man is still a part of nature, and what he does is mostly for the better"? If a wilderness is



© THOMAS VICTOR

Matthiessen, on the side of everything good, wants to think the best of everyone.

really to be a wilderness, what are Matthiessen, Nicholson, and the others doing in the Selous anyway?

Matthiessen does not identify these several riddles, but one by one they surface from his narrative. And as they did so, page by page I realized that *Sand Rivers* was a far better book than it pretended. Its parable reveals itself slyly, as gradually one perceives the mingled tensions and attractions between its three chief characters: the land itself at once so harsh and so harmonious; Mister Meat, playing the devil's advocate of this inquiry; Matthiessen ever struggling on, physically and figuratively too, in search of some reassuring denouement.

And the metaphor of it all, so rigidly controlled, so subtly disguised in trivia and introspection, comes to a head in the final part of the work, when Matthiessen and Nicholson set out with a handful of porters on a foot safari into the deepest part of the reserve. Rick, Ken, Tom, Maria are all left behind at camp, and with them remains much of Matthiessen's psychological baggage. The writing becomes simpler now, the thoughts less earnest, the story altogether grander.

Is there a moral to the fable of *Sand Rivers*? I don't know, and perhaps its author is uncertain himself, just as the development of his technique may well be as much instinctive as contrived. But whether deliberately or not, a haunting sense of reconciliation—between man and man, between man and landscape, perhaps between man and history—informs the final pages of this deceptive and remarkable work. Nothing much happens really, on this particular Last Safari: The great reserve does not teem with wild life, it seems, quite as it used to. The elephants show themselves reluctantly. The leopards roar offstage. The moments of excitement fizzle out.

Nothing much happens until Matthiessen, Nicholson, and their porters stumble almost face to face upon a rhinoceros and her calf, couched in a grove of saplings beside the track. It is a breathtaking moment. We freeze, and marvel at the sight. "In the morning sun, reflecting the soft light of shining leaves, this huge gray creature carved of stone is a thing magnificent, the ugliest and most beautiful life imaginable...." The porters scatter, the white men cautiously back away, their hearts in their mouths. The animal stands immobile for a moment, hunched and threatening: and then, even as they watch, settles gently down again in the shade of her retreat, her calf at her side.

It is the climax of the book, and superlatively done. The beauty and wonder of it, the fear, the strangeness, the silent reproach and restraint of the great beast—all possess some arcane element of serenity and revelation. "That was worth the whole safari," Matthiessen says to his companion, and it turns out that the two men have come to a wry and wary understanding of each other, even a degree of friendship.

We do not return to camp with the author and the game warden. Instead we are left at the end of the book still in the deep wilderness, following a winding river somewhere or other, I am not sure where, as though the tangled purposes of the whole enterprise, the perplexities and the antagonisms, the very woods, swamps, and savannahs of the vast reserve, have all been dissolved and redeemed in the imagination. ■

An inveterate traveler, Jan Morris is the author of *Destinations*, among other books.

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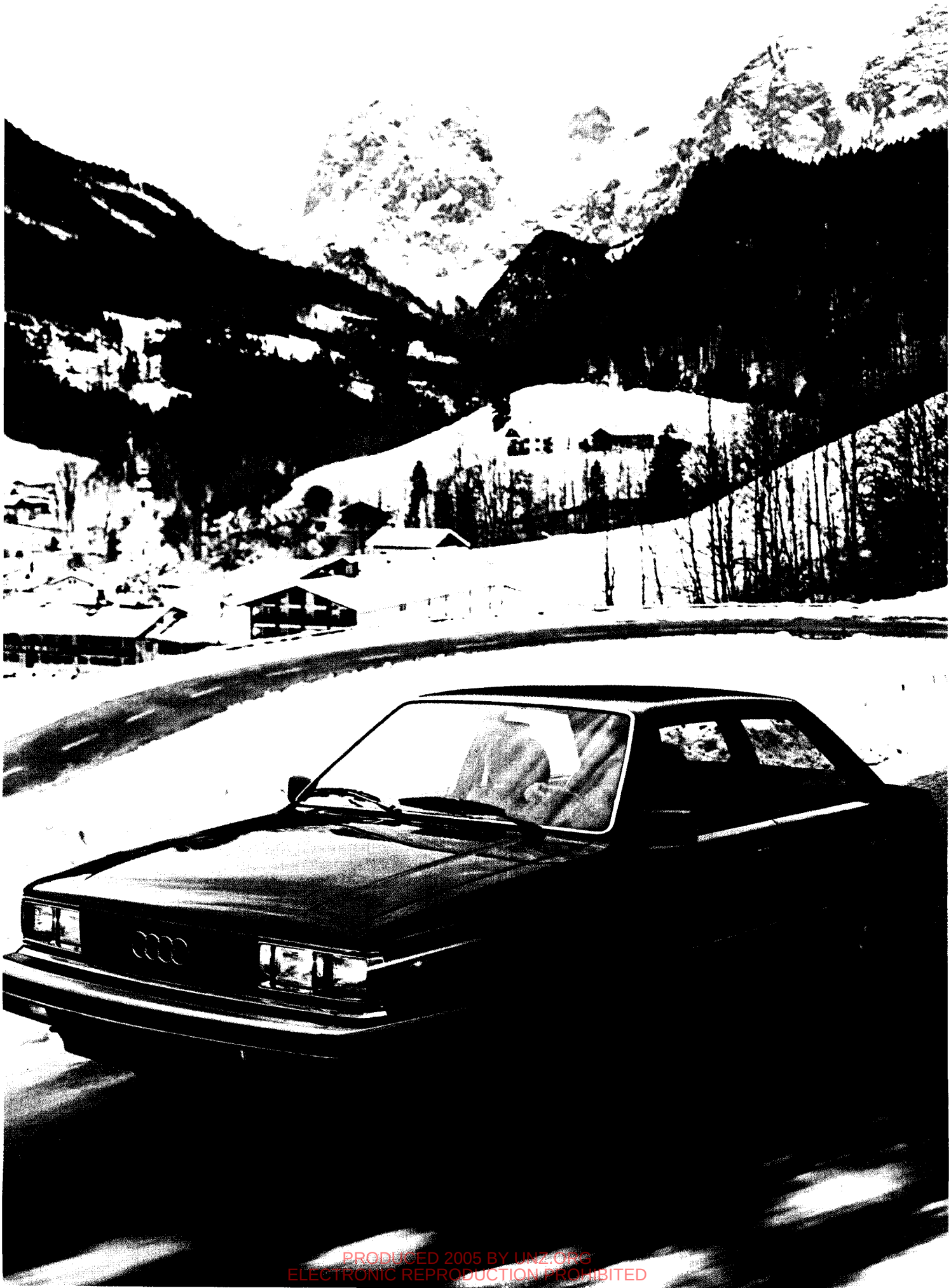

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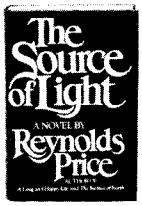
A Minor Faulkner

by Benjamin De Mott

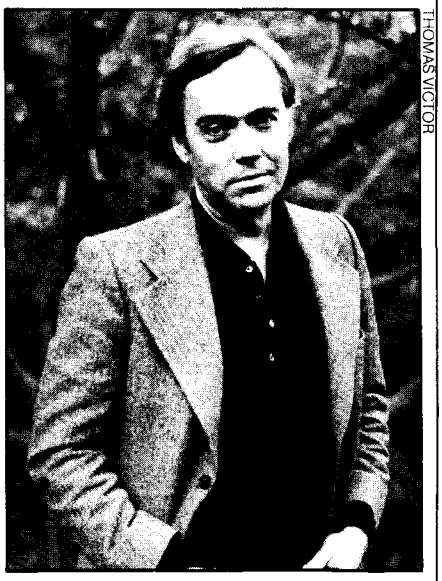


The Source of Light
by Reynolds Price
Atheneum,
320 pp. $12.95

Hutchins Mayfield, hero of *The Source of Light*, is a 25-year-old Southern prep schoolteacher with literary ambitions who's ceased for the time being to wish he was in Dixie. At the start of the book he's discovered saying farewell to old family haunts and retainers in North Carolina and environs, just prior to leaving for a two-year stay at Merton College, Oxford. Much of the subsequent narrative focuses on Hutch's first experiences of Europe (Rome, Wales, and the Scilly Isles, as well as Oxford), and upon various homosexual and heterosexual attachments he forms on foreign soil. The guilt induced in the hero by his flight is intensified by the death of his father (Hutch returns home to bury him), by his girlfriend's troubles (she aborts a child that may have been Hutch's), and by the not-so-veiled chiding of a number of loving elders who write him long letters ruminating about his clearing-out. But Hutchins Mayfield hangs tough: The book's closing scene shows him discussing Lewis Carroll in a pub with his Oxford tutor, and one concludes that, no matter what new pressures are exerted on him, he's likely to keep to his own schedules of self-development in the immediate future.

A fifth novel by an author who won fame with his first book, *A Long and Happy Life*, published nearly 20 years ago, *The Source of Light* continues a family saga begun in *The Surface of Earth* (1975). And there's much to admire in its pages. Reynolds Price has an unplodding imagination; he's perfectly capable of diverging from conventional realism long enough to describe a visit by the ghost of Robinson Mayfield to his son Hutch's bedside —the purpose of the visit is to bestow a blessing—or a moment when Hutch himself, thousands of miles distant from his father, is so powerfully touched by a premonition of the man's passing that he's brought to his knees to pray there'll be no pain.

In addition to the family feeling and


THOMAS VICTOR

Price—"no freshness or surprise."

sense of the past that mark the novel, there's an intelligent awareness that one effect of integration will be to make blacks and whites strangers to each other. (The book is set in the mid-Fifties, on the eve of the civil-rights struggle.) I particularly liked the author's readiness to savor interruptions of the narrative business at hand (space is made, for instance, for two highly enjoyable cameo appearances by the actress Vivien Leigh). And the structure of values throughout is admirable. *The Source of Light* is a 300-page narrative wherein absurdist savagery has no place and the idea of gentleness as a value isn't once mocked—which is to say, it's a rarity.

It's not, though, speaking bluntly, a compelling or exciting work of fiction. One failing is that the novelist merely assumes that the question whether his hero quits Europe or stays is momentous, but never demonstrates that it is. I was troubled too, by Price's difficulty in finding distinct voices for his characters. Nearly everybody in the book—from Southern preppies to Dilsey-style servants, to Oxford stonemasons, to liberated American women—speaks a lingo best described as Southern-clever-wry, and in time the sameness of the speech becomes disconcerting.

Finally there's the Faulkner problem. Significant differences exist between Hutchins Mayfield and Faulkner's young masculine heroes—and between Faulkner's old people and Price's—and between Faulkner's literary allusions (the Bible and Keats) and Price's (the Bible and Shakespeare)—and between Faulkner's conviction of the uniqueness of the Compsons and Price's conviction of the uniqueness of the Mayfield clan. But while the differences exist, I'm afraid they're not as noticeable as the resemblances. The overall impression left is that of a fictional world rendered indistinct by the spreading shade of the great Faulkner tree; no action or person or style of utterance quite manages to achieve energetically independent being. Dignity and intelligence are always visible in *The Source of Light*; what's missing is the quality of freshness and surprise that makes novels novel. ■

Benjamin De Mott is Andrew Mellon Professor of English at Amherst.

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Fiction Briefs

The Men's Club
by Leonard Michaels
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
181 pp., $10.95

BECAUSE HE THINKS it holds fewer possibilities for emotional chaos, guilt, and gonorrhea than an extramarital one-night stand, the unnamed narrator of *The Men's Club* joins six other men for an evening of guy-talk. Initially, this novel seems to be about male consciousnesses being raised while the rest of the party has retired to the women's room. But nothing so banal doing. Instead it's a book in which humor, resentment, and brutality bubble forth from men trying to make sense of their lives with women.

In his previous (and acclaimed) two collections of short stories—*Going Places* and *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could*—Leonard Michaels often examines the same theme and always with the same implied conclusion: It isn't love that binds the sexes but an awful compulsion to cling together in ineluctable, primitive combat. Whether or not this view is unrealistically narrow, the stories hit the target and quiver like steel arrows because Michaels's prose is a combination of the spare and the melodramatic encountered only in rare masterpieces like Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*.

Michaels's long-awaited first novel, although funny, painful, and unflinching, runs into trouble because he hasn't applied the lean, vigorous strokes of his stories to a novel. He has simply relaxed the grip he maintains on the brush of the shorter form and has let it stray, thus providing both too much and too little. *The Men's Club* is worth reading not because it is a novel that cuts deeply, but because it is like a crucial *chapter* in a novel that cuts deeply.—DAVID FINKLE

Original Sins
by Lisa Alther
Alfred A. Knopf, 608 pp., $13.95

THE FIVE ill-fated protagonists in Lisa Alther's latest are finger puppets, not people. The story opens with a quintet of promising youngsters perched in a weeping beech and ends, after much waggling of novelistic devices, with their own progeny playing in the same tree. What becomes of their hopes and dreams in between?

Pretty Sally marries her cousin, the football hero, and settles into a life of daytime soaps and Eat Me Orange nail polish. Her bulldog husband Jed, still abiding by the tenets of his high-school coach, scrambles for promotion to management of the local mill. Sally's brainy sister Emily and Jed's brother Raymond flee Tennessee for New York City where they rally to the rhetoric of the popular political "isms" of the Sixties and Seventies. That leaves Donny, the maid's grandson, a "good niggah" with a dead-end job as janitor until he skips town and sprouts an Afro.

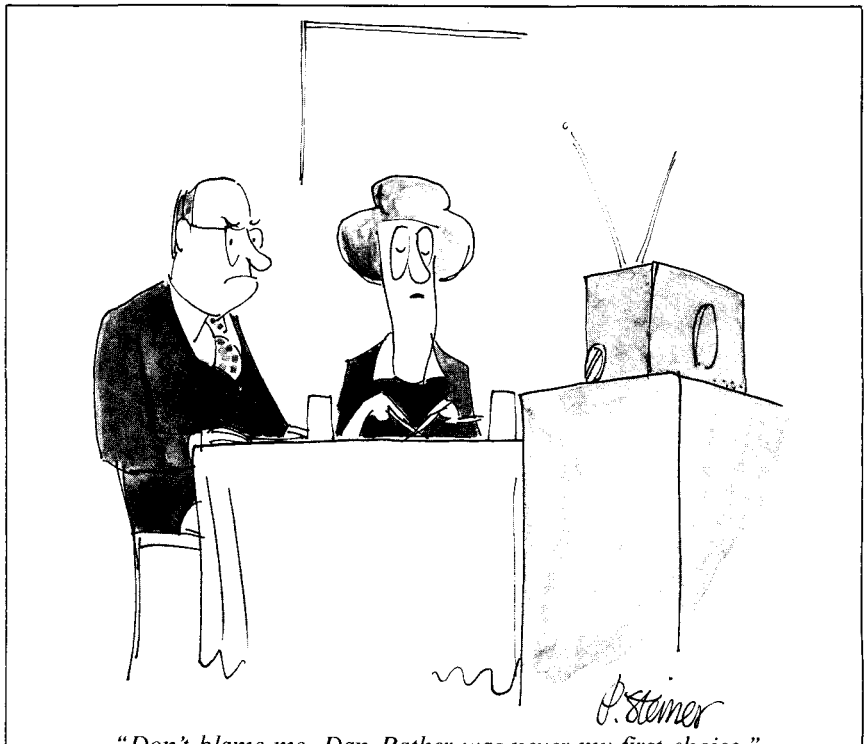
Growing up and leaving home are the themes here. Separation from family and inherited territory is the struggle represented. Oh, how hard it is, the author says; so hard, it's never really accomplished. We're all locusts who have shed our shells, "helpless larvae, cold, naked and unprotected." Despite the tired one-liners ("He picked her up out of the dirt and turned her into the clod she was today") and the easy pokes at stale dogma, we are supposed to take this book seriously. We are supposed to care about these predictable characters and their predictably aborted pursuits of happiness.

No go. Alther's *Kinflicks* was glib, but *Original Sins* is more so. In the former, the thoughts of a dying mother on the subject of her protean daughter kept the novel several cuts above sitcom. In the latter, canned laughter prevails. —LAURA GERINGER

Seagull
by Yashar Kemal
translated by Thilda Kemal
Pantheon, 250 pp., $11.95

SINCE PASSION and desire are rarely the stuff of stories about children, Yashar Kemal's *Seagull*, a grand and ramshackle examination of precisely these emotions, is a noteworthy addition to that small list of vigorous books that can be read by both adults and children for equal if not exactly the same exhilaration.

Salih, a young Turkish boy living in a contemporary but not altogether mod-



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BOOKS

ern fishing village, finds a seagull whose wing is broken and devotes his fevered days and nights to trying to persuade someone in the village to cure the gull. Among the obstacles he must overcome in his determined search are a lunatic grandmother with renowned healing powers, an alcoholic father, a neighbor getting more and more deeply involved in smuggling, and an apathetic—as Salih sees it from his child's viewpoint—attitude the world takes toward a little boy and his dying gull.

Kemal, who is building a solid international reputation as a storyteller, is far from apathetic, however. He cares about Salih, and it is his understanding of what children choose as their obsessions, how they create their fantasies (a good deal of the digressive narrative is given over to a fairy tale Salih makes up) that gives impetus and strength to the symphonic quest.

It's possible that Kemal might have trimmed some of his excesses and produced an even better work. But what counts is that *Seagull* is one of those books that over the years may quietly reveal itself to be a classic.

—DAVID FINKLE

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love
by Raymond Carver
Alfred A. Knopf, 159 pp., $9.95

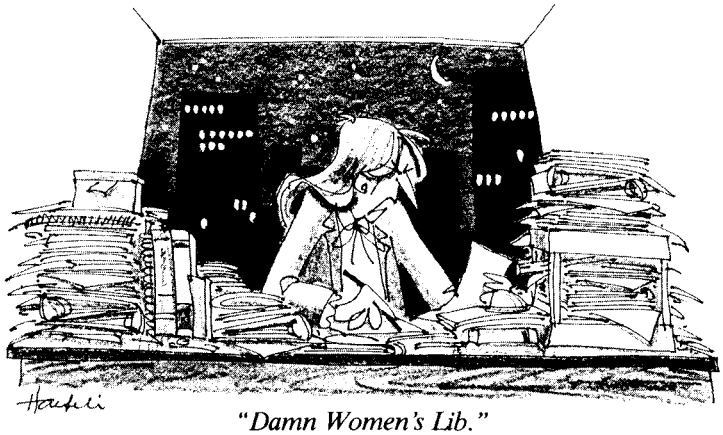
SEVENTEEN TALES of Hopelessville, its marriages and alcoholic wreckage, told in a prose as sparingly clear as a fifth of iced Smirnoff. By my tally there are 13 hits and four so-sos or undecideds. But even the undecideds have something to commend them, and the hits are sometimes perfect. Rather, the uncanny power of Carver's drained images will often carry a story to a fulfillment beyond mere plot.

In Carver's world of whiskey-diminished household daylight, life is raw banality, lettered ashtrays, forgotten candy sacks, coffee-ringed notes on the kitchen table, living rooms for empty jawing, hallucinatory backyards, funerals. Crazy talk between long nourishing stares out the window. His characters wonder why their feelings don't fit what's happening, why their chemically depersonalized lives don't join halfway decently.

In the astounding "So Much Water So Close to Home," four heavy topers go on a fishing trip, find a girl's nude body in a stream on the afternoon they arrive, and sit around drinking and fishing for three days before hiking to phone the sheriff at vacation's end. This brutal feelinglessness is carried over, but subdued in "Why Don't You Dance?" A hopeless man moves all his and his departed wife's furnishings onto the front lawn, hooks everything up to work, and has a yard sale to which two young people drop in, drink until evening, spin records, and dance into the twilight. Yet something dreadful about him is left untold.

A strong, nearly clinical collection of fugue states by the author of *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*, nominated for the 1977 National Book Award.

—DONALD NEWLOVE



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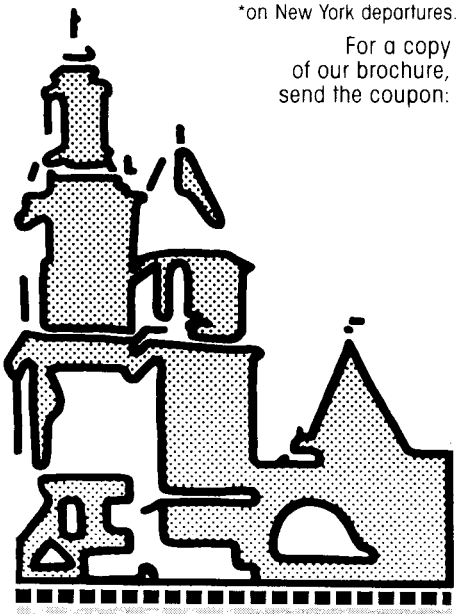

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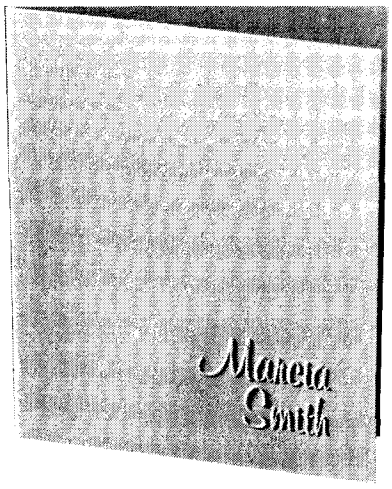

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BOOKS

Winter Count
by Barry Holstun Lopez
Charles Scribner's Sons, 128 pp., $9.95

BARRY HOLSTUN LOPEZ is an Easterner who has migrated westward, ever further westward in a series of beautifully constructed, slender volumes that move back and forth between fiction and nonfiction, all of which grow out of his radical alignment with the truths that dwell in nature. *Winter Count* is his fifth book. It may be the one that will win him recognition as a writer who like, say, Peter Matthiessen or Edward Hoagland, goes to the wilderness in order to clarify a great deal about civilization.

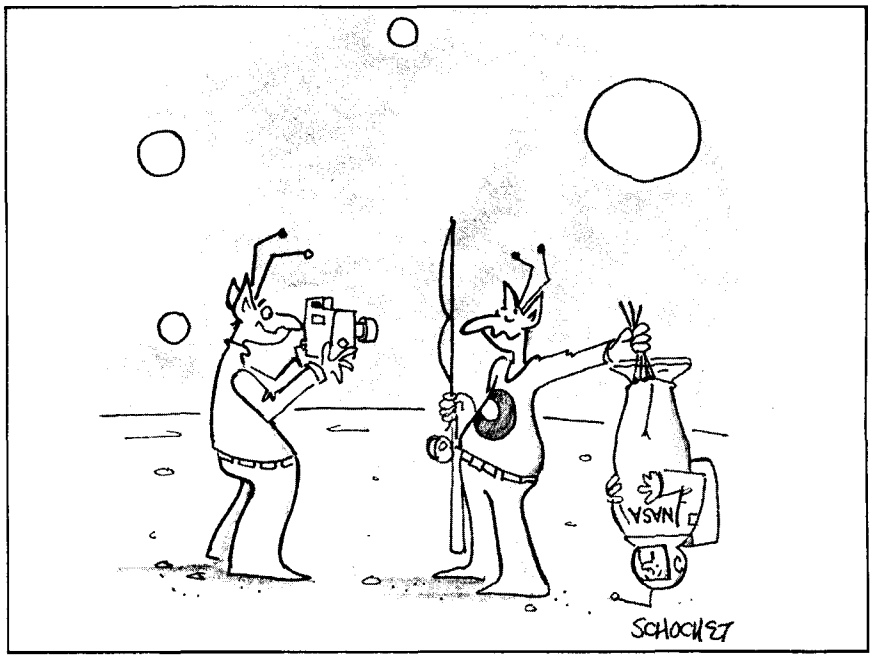
The 10 fiction sketches in *Winter Count* portray sensitive observers, a number of them scientists and naturalists, coming to terms with various kinds of life both wild and tame in places as dissimilar as the American southwest, Park Avenue, Los Angeles, and Sanibel Island. Encounters with desert winds "of wild refinement," rivers that disappear, buffalo as spry as mountain goats, shells upon which the world's fate seems to rest, men who make pebbles fly, help Lopez's protagonists achieve their immediate desire to, as one of them puts it, "let go of a fundamental anguish."

Weaving "literalisms and metaphors and forms of proof" into a style reminiscent of some important contemporary Latin American magical realists, Lopez turns the sentiments of a decade's worth of ecology lovers into a deeply felt and unnervingly powerful picture of reality. —ALAN CHEUSE

November
by Rolf Schneider
Alfred A. Knopf, 240 pp., $11.95

VOMITING ALCOHOL every morning and ready to switch to low-tar cigarettes, privileged, "infallible" Natasha Roth, East Berlin's widely read writer-intellectual, is feeling her age. Her latest book, an in-depth story of a social worker, dissatisfies her because it ends before the real-life worker's arrest for attempted flight to the West with her three children. How can she face writing her new book about Rimbaud in the Paris Commune when she's already bored with her notes? Or face her son Stefan, now coming home after a long hospitalization following a bicycle-car collision? Should she write the tragic tale of the East German singer Rebecca and her poet-husband Bodakov (he can be published only in West Germany and so is abused by Red newspapers)? All these questions are considered finely against the intellectual climate of Red Berlin along with the Roths' eerie daily minutia.

After Stefan slowly recovers from



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partial paralysis and returns to school, he sees his art-historian father Rudolph with his arm around a strange blonde—is he having an affair? Natasha finds an incriminating phone number in Rudolph's pocket, and is quickly, knowingly, locked into the clichés of jealousy. When Bodakov publishes a slim volume that gets him exiled to West Germany and his Communist citizenship revoked, Natasha and other Eastern writers flock to Rebecca, who's left behind, and sign a protest letter. But as days pass and Soviet pressure builds, two of the signers repudiate the letter. The undermining of Natasha continues until she too chooses to abandon her citizenship, while Rudolph asks for a divorce.

Through Stefan's and Natasha's sensibilities, East Germany is a perpetual November. As brilliantly translated by Michael Bullock, *November* has superb moments of frosty objectivity and strangling moodiness, and an iron grip on characters in a rats' maze. In all, a bitter picture of the writer's life.

—DONALD NEWLOVE

Nonfiction Briefs

Basin and Range
by John McPhee
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
224 pp., $10.95

"I WANT TO...suggest the general history of the continent by describing events and landscapes that geologists see written in rocks," John McPhee says in *Basin and Range*. And he proves to be surprisingly modest. Like the geologists he venerates, McPhee knows how to "look at mud and see mountains" and how to dramatize the slow history of the earth. A dream vision of a house of carpets on fire illuminates the underworld, with its "pile after pile of shags and broadlooms, hooks and throws, para-Persians and polyesters" melting, mixing, and finally hardening on the stairs. An image of continental barges "on a collision course" animates the theory of plate tectonics, an attempt to explain how mountains are built and why the Nevada Basin may someday again be undersea.

Unfortunately, McPhee does not stop with the drama of geology; he tries to establish its epic stature. Granted, this perspective inculcates enormous respect for the earth's 4.5 billion-year history. (Compare this to the paltry 2 million years our species is expected to last.) But it also undermines the book. Almost every chapter harks back to our continent's development or forward to the underwater future of the West. And every field trip yields momentous reflection, every rock a cosmic clue. So an almost extraordinary collage of geological history and personal adventure is ultimately subverted by cloying awe.

—ROBIN BROMLEY

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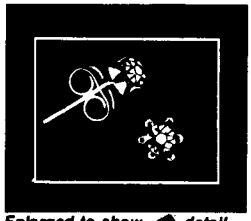
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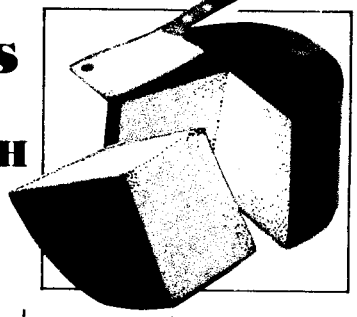

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BOOKS

Stephen King's Danse Macabre
by Stephen King
Everest House, 416 pp., $13.95

STEPHEN KING is that rare phenomenon among authors of popular fiction: an entertainer who never stoops, but generally conquers. With a little help from the vampires, ghosts, and psychic deviants who inhabit the pages of such novels as *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot*, and *The Shining*, King has acquired a monstrous (so to speak) reading public while avoiding the explicit gore that has recently spilled out of the movie theaters and into horror fiction.

Stephen King's Danse Macabre is King's first book of nonfiction: an apologia for all the blood sucked and bodies devoured in the heroic effort to keep us happily scared witless. Unfortunately, what begins as an examination of horror novels and movies of the past three decades rapidly degenerates into an entertaining but essentially rudderless self-interview. While musing over such gems of the genre as *Night of the Living Dead* and *The Haunting of Hill House*, King too often digresses into friendly, but more or less pointless, discussions of his own life, work, and views.

King comes across as intelligent and unpretentious, but even his most devoted fans should hesitate before paying the price of a book for nothing more than a magazine interview.

—ANDREW KLAVAN

Mary Chesnut's Civil War
edited by C. Vann Woodward
Yale University Press, 886 pp., $29.95

OCCASIONALLY AN HISTORICAL document raises itself above the gray mass of source material to become an odd, elusive classic. Works like Suetonius's *Twelve Caesars* and Froissart's *Chronicles*, though artful, are not remembered for their art, and certainly not for their accuracy, but for their authors' ability to become Dantesque guides through visions of the world they knew. Mary Boykin Chesnut had that ability, and her journals of the Civil War are a painfully brilliant record of our old America at daggers drawn.

As the tough-minded but sickly wife of a Confederate politician and plantation owner, Mrs. Chesnut was able to observe members from all strata of southern society, from president to slave. Her wit and shrewdness, her fierce abhorrence of slavery, her feminist ambitions, make those observations peculiarly modern. Today's reader is effortlessly drawn into her "gallant, gay, unfortunate" south, as its frenzied pre-war waltzes fade into the endless death march, and finally only into echoes in the ruins of a "world kissed to pieces."

C. Vann Woodward's editing of this latest, most complete edition of the Chesnut journals is exemplary: unobtrusive and instructive. He has reacquainted us with a remarkable woman; and she has reacquainted us with the living past.

—ANDREW KLAVAN

The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism
by Claire Sterling
Holt, Rinehart & Winston
334 pp.,$13.95

AT FIRST GLANCE, Claire Sterling's laconic, densely documented account of the terrorist phenomenon would seem an unbiased and straightforward piece of investigative journalism. Yet a careful reading reveals its central thesis—that the Soviet Union is the prime mover of global terrorism—to be a foregone conclusion shored up by a careful selection of facts.

The Terror Network reads like a complex thriller that spans continents and links together disparate characters and motivations. According to Sterling, since 1968 various "fronts" and "armies" have attempted to "destabilize" Western and pro-Western democracies. Under the avuncular tutelage of the Soviet KGB, a bewildering mix of nationalities has streamed through the guerrilla training camps in Cuba, Palestine, and elsewhere. To ply their trade, terrorist groups have crossed frontiers with astonishing ease, often carrying ill-concealed caches of guns and explosives—and an occasional Soviet-made guided missile.

Although Sterling makes a fair case

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for KGB culpability in sponsoring terrorism, there are disturbing gaps in the presentation of her evidence: She barely gives rightist terrorism a nod, nor does she examine the clandestine activities of Western intelligence agencies. But her book does ring true in its scrutiny of the peregrinations and activities of stateless malcontents hell-bent on translating muddled ideology into violence. —DAVID BELL

Mountbatten
by Richard Hough
Random House, 256 pp., $15

THE LIFE OF Lord Mountbatten, born Prince Louis of Battenberg in 1900, in many ways mirrored the sunset of the British Empire. At his christening he was held by his great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, and his childhood holidays were spent at royal castles in England and Germany and on the Russian Tsar's yacht. He married the richest heiress in England and learned to live with her infidelities.

Following his German-born father into the British navy, Mountbatten spent World War II helping defend the Empire as Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia. But after the war he helped liquidate Britain's colonial holdings as Viceroy of India. Cousin to Queen Elizabeth II and uncle to her husband, Prince Philip, he succeeded in having the name Mountbatten-Windsor adopted for the Queen's heirs. In August 1979, while vacationing at his Irish estate, Mountbatten was killed when members of the Irish Republican Army blew up his fishing boat. He had already planned his own funeral, down to the guest list.

This is not an official biography but an informal portrait—admiring but candid, balanced but often critical—of a man who claimed that he never made a mistake in his life. Mountbatten was always controversial. Brilliant, hard-working, ambitious, vain, and arrogant, he seemed to his contemporaries somehow un-English, yet ended as a national hero. That he also emerges as likable and vulnerable is in part a tribute to Richard Hough's highly readable appraisal.

—RONALD NEVANS

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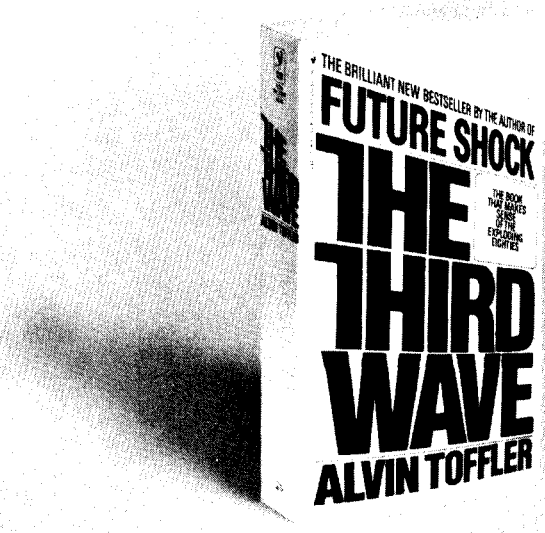

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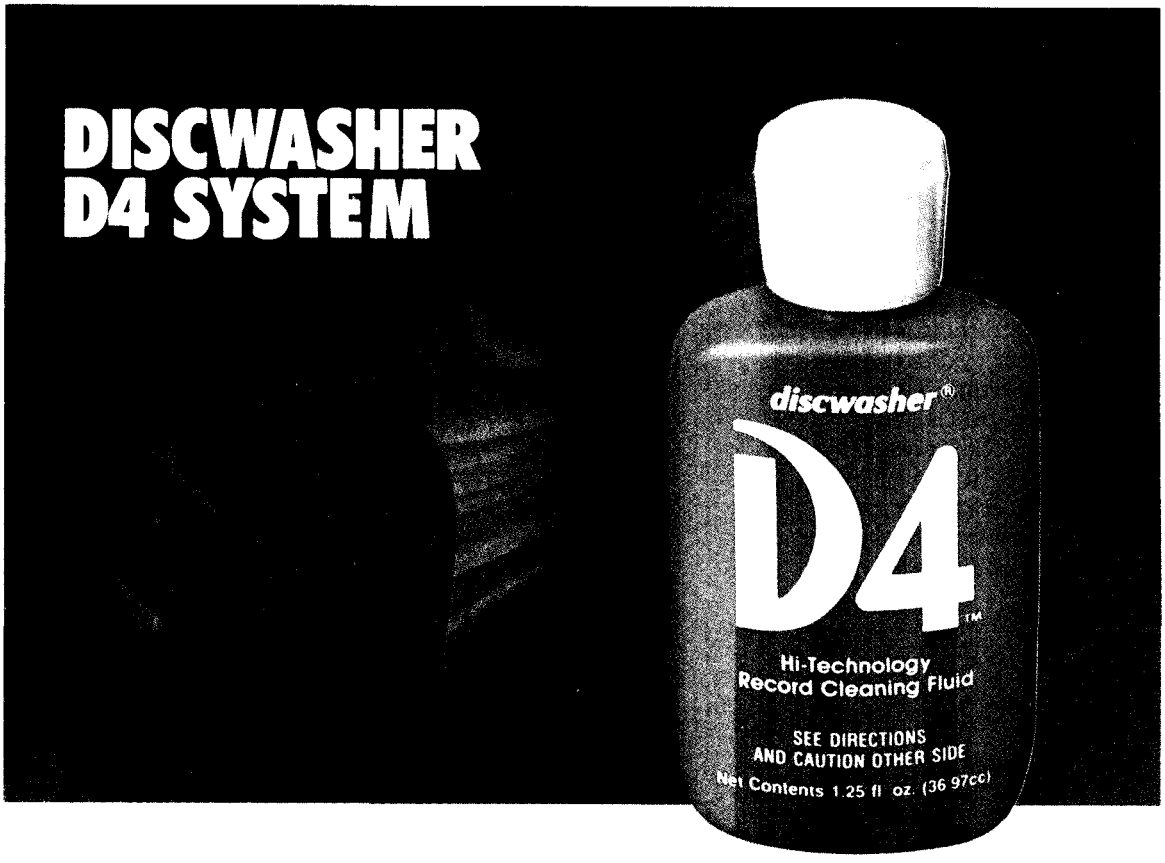

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Thomas H. Middleton

Why Jeannot Can't Read

The first French book I read from cover to cover—I mean the first *real* French book, read only for pleasure, no *Vocabulary* in the back, no *Review Questions* at the end of each chapter—was *Les Carnets du Major Thompson*, by Pierre Daninos. I was living in Paris at the time, in 1955. Major Thompson is Daninos's fictional Englishman, whose comments on France and the French are an absolute delight and provide as good an introduction to reading for pleasure in French as do sexy French stories. Better, in fact, unless you're hooked on *slips*, *soutiens-gorge*, *portes jarretelles*, and other lacy delicacies.

Last year, I met Pierre Daninos himself at a party in Los Angeles. He and his beautiful wife, Marie-Pierre, were on vacation, touring the United States. The Daninoses expressed concern about what is happening to their language. They're not worried about foreign imports—what used to be called *Coca-culture*—but about the current laxity in speech and writing, the quantity of junk that passes for acceptable French. On learning that I write a column on language, Daninos told me that he writes similar columns in France.

Long ago, my French wasn't half bad, but over the years it has atrophied and is now a shadow of its former self. M. Daninos's English is, I should think, a cut or two below my French, but Mme. Daninos's English is excellent, so she and I have had some correspondence.

I was surprised to learn from her that the French are having a problem of illiteracy among their youth comparable to ours. Mme. Daninos wrote me a letter deploring the use of the *methode globale* in teaching children to read, what we call the "look-say," or "sight-word" method.

That the French would have adopted the look-say method came as a shock to me. I've mentioned before that I find it puzzling that anyone would consider look-say a particularly good method for any language that uses an alphabet rather than ideograms. To refresh the memory of anyone who might wonder what is meant by "look-say," "sight-word," and the French *globale*, it is the method Rudolf Flesch blasted back in 1955 in his book *Why Johnny Can't Read*. The child is not taught the alphabet and the sounds of the letters in their various combinations (the *phonic* method that M. and Mme. Daninos and I learned—and you, too, if you are of our generation); in look-say, the teacher subjects the students to whole words until they learn those words as totalities. The students are expected to have mastered a certain number of words over a given period of time. Here's one of Flesch's examples of an excerpt from a typical modern look-say reading textbook:

A child taught the "look-say" method could never read "frobalaggry."

> "Quack, quack," said the duck.
> He wanted something.
> He did not want to get out.
> He did not want to go to the farm.
> He did not want to eat.
> He sat and sat and sat.

I think a bright, energetic youngster, faced with that sort of material, would probably find something better to do, like climbing the wall, removing the legs from his chair, or starting a scrap with his neighbor. But if a nice, docile child reads that often enough, he'll be able, it is hoped, to recognize those words when he sees them. That will give him a reading vocabulary of 18 words. However, he will probably not be able to make out *horse*, *goat*, *chicken*, *she*, *her*, or *him*, because he hasn't encountered the words yet.

English is notorious for some of its phonetic absurdities, but by and large it functions well enough phonetically so that a reasonably bright eight-year-old, taught to sound letters and groups by the old-fashioned phonics method, will probably be able to work out the pronunciation not only of *horse* and *chicken*, but of *frobalaggry*, even though I'm the only person in the world who knows what *frobalaggry* means, having just coined it. (It is the grubby, rubbery residue that must be brushed off a page after one has made an erasure.)

French is so much more phonetically consistent than English that it is quite astonishing that the French should have fallen for look-say. If it makes little sense in English, it makes even less in French.

Rudolf Flesch maintained that it is largely the big money involved that keeps look-say in business, and I suppose French textbook publishers, like their American counterparts, know a good thing when they see one. What better way to make fat francs than to create a demand for millions of copies of books saying the equivalent of "Quack, quack."

So the problem spreads, and more and more Johnnies and Jeannies and Jeannots and Jeannettes can't read. If they can't read, they can't write; if they can't write, they can't reason far beyond mere scheming; if they can't reason beyond scheming, God help us all. ■

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FILM

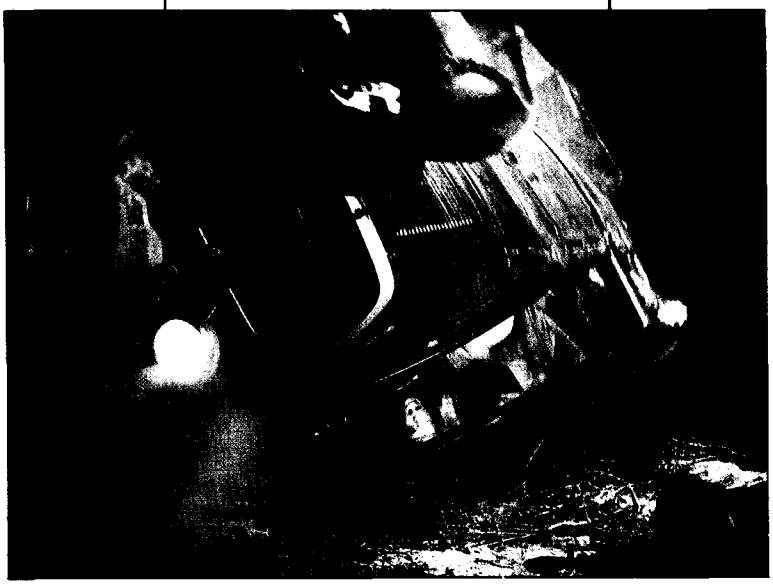
Judith Crist

Old Formulas Never Die

Castles may crumble and crowned—or studio—heads may tumble, but that old Hollywood truism, adapted abroad and by Broadway over the years, remains: If at first you *do* succeed, you do it again and again and again . . . and nobody looks for a motive beyond the dollar sign.

Thus in the spring of 1981 we get the fourth film version of James M. Cain's brilliantly terse 188-page first novel, **The Postman Always Rings Twice**, a tale of lust, greed, murder (to delight the tub-thumper), and retribution (to delight the moralist). MGM bought the property soon after its publication in 1934, but the sex and violence proved a bit heady for the Hays office and it was shelved until 1946. By then Cain himself had written a stage version (produced on Broadway in 1936 with Richard Barthelmess, Mary Philips, and Joseph Greenwald); a French film version, *Le Dernier Tournant* with Fernand Gravet, Corinne Luchaire, and Michel Simon, had been produced in 1939 but never shown here; and in 1942, with disregard for copyright and film rights, Luchino Visconti had made his feature directorial debut with *Ossessione*. Barred from this country until 1975, *Ossessione* is a gritty and turgid adaptation more significant as the model for the Italian neo-realist school.

By 1946 the Production Code was adapting itself to a postwar world; besides, two subsequent Cain novels had been filmed into box-office bonanzas: *Double Indemnity*, in 1944, and *Mildred Pierce*, a year later. And so the first American film version of *Postman* was made in what James Agee described at the time as "a depth of seriousness incompatible with the material, complicated by a paralysis of fear of the front office." This he found a major interest, because "it is what can happen, especially in Hollywood, if you are forced to try both to eat your cake and have it, and don't realize that it is, after all, only good pumpernickel." Agee, who found the film "mainly a terrible misfortune from start to finish," applauded, however, its view of "the Law as an invincibly corrupt and terrifying force before which mere victims, whether innocent or guilty, can only stand helpless and aghast." Other contemporary critics were less socially conscious, bowled over by Lana Turner's emergence as actress, satisfied as always by John Garfield's dark, brooding, internalized performance, even pleased by (or unaware of) the transformation of Cain's arrogant Greek immigrant into Cecil Kellaway's jolly sub-surface-mean Englishman as the cuckolded husband-victim. And the film became a semi-classic of the tough black-and-white slick, commercial films of the Forties.



A murder is staged in another remake of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*.

Thirty-five years later *Postman* has been given a class production, with Bob Rafelson (to be honored for *Five Easy Pieces*, if not *The King of Marvin Gardens* and *Stay Hungry*) as co-producer and director; playwright David Mamet making his screenwriting debut; Jack Nicholson our latter-day Garfield; Jessica Lange (best known as the lady in the latter-day King Kong's mechanical hand, emerging, Turner-like, as an actress) and John Colicos returning the husband to his Cain-given nationality. And it has the "realism" that today's screen allows, primarily in the Depression-era setting (a flaw in the earlier film set in 1946) that motivates and underlines the characters' aspirations and frustrations and that Sven Nykvist's cinematography brings to muted and moody life.

And we can, of course, face the facts of life and Cain that the Forties couldn't. Not only the Law and its officers are corrupt—but even the insurance companies that were Cain's particular interest. And, of course, the old Sex and Violence can get their due. The intricacies of the love-hate relationship come

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Lana Turner and John Garfield (left) as fated lovers in the 1946 *Postman*. Nicholson and Lange play it steamier in 1981.

clear, the near-anger and edginess of obsession underlying even placid moments. Lange's blowsy sensuality and Nicholson's twitchy raunchiness are such that Cain's "smell" of sexuality emanates from her sulky languors and the boorishness of her lover's appetites, permeating their recurring tensions, eventually saturating the screen.

The Mamet screenplay takes a few liberties, such as indulging to small purpose in a Greek party with ethnic clichés. But above all, the framework of the death-cell confession (in both the novel and the 1946 film) has been eliminated. With the abrupt conclusion, one wonders whether those unfamiliar with the originals will get Cain's ironic point, let alone make sense of the title, left as they are with a personal deprivation rather than divine—or social—retribution. Or are we too sophisticated for that in the Eighties? Perhaps some of us are too sophisticated for a pseudo-Greek tragedy in terms of kitchen-table humpers. But however you slice it, *The Postman Always Rings Twice* is still good pumpernickel: This time around it's coarser, cruder, and steamier. We peasants happen to like it that way.

Other reworkings are less successful. This time around Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault are simply boring in **La Cage Aux Folles II**, a dreary exploitation of the success—fully justified—of the simple-minded but fresh and funny farce that sentimentalized their homosexual relationship. A dully contrived and clichéd espionage plot sags under Tognazzi's straightman role and is made unbearable by Serrault's squeaks and squeals as he goes through a tedious variety of transvestite turns.

This time around it's Peter Ustinov (and a variety of other good performers in supporting roles) who's left high and dry by a dreary script in **Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen**; why can't the uninspired let classic Hollywood characters sleep the sleep of the dated?

This time around, for the old Mummy's Curse exotic adventure school, there's **Sphinx**, an incoherent yarn about lost tombs, crooked antiques dealers, and a brave, gorgeous, ambitious Egyptologist (Lesley-Ann Down)—but it is, oddly, not boring.

Where's the freshness, the adventure in filmmaking? Ralph Bakshi's **American Pop**, the story of four generations of men involved in show business, has an excitement, an energy, a vitality that are hard to resist and that have been the hallmark of this extraordinary animator's work from the start. Through *Fritz the Cat* and *Heavy Traffic*, with a digression into fantasy with *Wizards* and *Lord of the Rings*, Bakshi, the most creative anti-Disney artist of major stature functioning today, has combined social comment, human perception, and outrageous wit to remarkable effectiveness. With a Ronni Kern script that only momentarily edges toward the softly sentimental and slightly slick, he is concerned with the popular moods music has touched on or reflected in the course of this century. One can quarrel with some specific musical choices or lack thereof, but one cannot question the thrust and point. Bakshi is streetwise and mature, his artistry in full bloom; his characters achieve a humanity rare in animated figures, and his backgrounds continue to grow in depth and complexity. The excitement lies in appreciating the vast reach of his ambition—and realizing that his art is not that far behind. ■

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DANCE

Walter Terry

Regional Treasures

There she was, a five-year-old with sausage curls, beaded eyelashes, a scarlet mouth, and a short glitzy costume. She wore toe shoes, and as she staggered onto *pointe* she sang "My lips were made for kisses." This was a fairly typical number in a typical dance school recital of some 40-odd years ago when I began my career as a dance critic. The poor child looked as if she were being trained for bordello life rather than for ballet. But in those distant days there were few national ballet companies of any standing outside of New York City, and the robust National Association for Regional Ballet, with member companies and schools from coast to coast, was yet to be born. Dance junk has not disappeared entirely, but the regional ballet movement has spectacularly elevated standards of instruction and taste.

Recently, in fact, the well-publicized performances of more than a dozen national companies in two special series at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Brookyn College have shown New Yorkers that American ballet is greatly diversified. Some elitist balletomanes and critics have been shocked by the healthy, hearty, and often husky vigor of, say, Ballet West from Salt Lake City or the oldest of the country's professional ballet companies, the **San Francisco Ballet**, founded in 1933. Michael Smuin's *Song for Dead Warriors* for the San Francisco Ballet, for example, shocked some sensibilities. It was not a pretty or even prettily sad picture of the plight of the urban American Indian. Using multimedia, fantastic props, and harsh dance-acting, it came out punching and stabbing. This was ballet, and powerful ballet, but it had nothing whatever to do with Balanchine, Ashton, or the neo-classicists.

The regional ballets that came to Brooklyn, though usually smaller than the professional companies in personnel and more modest in production, are equally important to the American dance scene. The Atlanta Ballet, founded by Dorothy Alexander, spearheaded the movement in the South in 1956. "Miss Dorothy" remains its patron saint.

In the North, the veteran **Dayton Ballet**, headed by Josephine and Hermene Schwarz, has produced dancers and choreographers who have gone on to international success. Every balletomane knows the wonderfully versatile and winsome Rebecca Wright, soloist with the American Ballet Theatre and director of her own ballet ensemble, or the Duell brothers, Daniel and Joseph, valued members of the New York City Ballet; and Donna Wood, one of the major star attractions of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Dayton's "Miss Jo" also trained Stuart Sebastian who, at a precocious 14, created a full-length ballet for her company. Sebastian went on to become a principal dancer with Washington's now-disbanded National Ballet, partnered such ballerinas as Dame Margot Fonteyn and Violette Verdy, and ultimately quit dancing (at 23) for a career in choreography. As one of the most gifted of America's young (he's just turned 30) choreographers, he has created works for the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, the Hartford Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Joffrey II, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Munich (Germany) Ballet Days, an international festival where he scored popular and critical triumphs.

Most recently he staged for Dayton a full-length *Sleeping Beauty*, to the Tchaikovsky score, with his own choreography. There were elaborate and yet lightly charming decor and costumes, rather like illustrations for a child's book of fairy tales, by Mimi Maxmen, and choreography, classical

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Janus and Morgan of Joffery II in Gray Veredon's *Unfolding*

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in step yet spiced with originality of pattern and danced acting (replacing the old traditional mime), of a high order. It broke all attendance records in the long history of the Dayton Ballet and it received standing ovations at all performances. A few old fuddy-duddies objected to "tampering" with the Marius Petipa choreography of 1895, completely oblivious of the fact that this ballet and other classics have been altered, restaged, and rechoreographed continuously over the decades. To mount a successful *Sleeping Beauty* for a group of only 15 very young dancers constitutes a minor triumph. To that I will add the fact that it is the only *Sleeping Beauty*—including those by Britain's Royal Ballet or Moscow's Bolshoi—without a yawn in it!

In addition to the big professional national ballet companies and the many regional ballets, the American dance scene is enriched by "second" or junior companies. The American Ballet Theatre has its first-rate Ballet Repertory Company, directed by Richard Englund; there is an Ailey II; the Boston Ballet has its Boston Ballet Ensemble; and perhaps the most famous of these ballet babies is Joffrey II, directed by Sally Brayley Bliss. All of these "seconds" are training grounds for their "firsts," but they have immense importance in their own right.

Ingenuity and resourcefulness are essential to the success of a low-budget second company. Last summer, for example, the **Boston Ballet Ensemble** had a budget of $750 for a program consisting of *Holberg Suite*, *Le Corsaire* (pas de deux), *Donizetti Variations*, and a brand-new ballet, *Sailin' Aweigh*, by the 14-member group's acting director Tony Catanzaro (a principal with the mother company). Catanzaro managed to costume his ballet, a tribute to 350 years of American sailors, for $600.

For *Sailin' Aweigh*, his first choreography, Catanzaro found inspiration in sea chanties, in paintings of seamen in raging storms or returning to their waiting womenfolk, in visits to the U.S.S. *Constitution* (*Old Ironsides*), in Gene Kelly dance sequences and, believe it or not, through the Pentagon, where he managed to reach the chief musicians of the U.S. Navy Band! The result was a blockbuster ballet.

Sally Brayley Bliss (who, incidentally, discovered choreographer Stuart Sebastian at a regional ballet festival and gave him his first choreographic opportunity outside of Dayton through Joffrey II) points out that every year she draws about 12 dancers (and four backups) from various regional ballets for her **Joffrey II**. So beautifully does she train them as performers in excellent repertories ranging from the classic through modern to jazz, that she loses them swiftly to the Joffrey Ballet itself. Last year, all 12 moved up into Robert Joffrey's first company. This year, Joffrey II is totally new in personnel, including a personable young dancer named Ron Reagan, promising in those ballets with a show-biz beat or with romantic airs.

With Maria Grandy, her associate, Bliss heaves a sad, but curiously proudful sigh each year when she loses most, if not all of her dancers to possible fame and fortune with the Joffrey Ballet and other companies around the world. With a captivating smile for which she is famous in the ballet world, she says ruefully, "The only people who don't move up and on are myself and Maria!" But onward and upward moves the dance in America because of dedicated professionals like Bliss, "Miss Dorothy," "Miss Jo," and all of those who serve not ballet on Broadway only but, rather, Ballet USA. ■

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Sleeping Beauty **at the Dayton Ballet, a regional company that has produced dancers and choreographers of international renown.**

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THEATER

Stanley Kauffmann

Piaf in Bits and Pieces

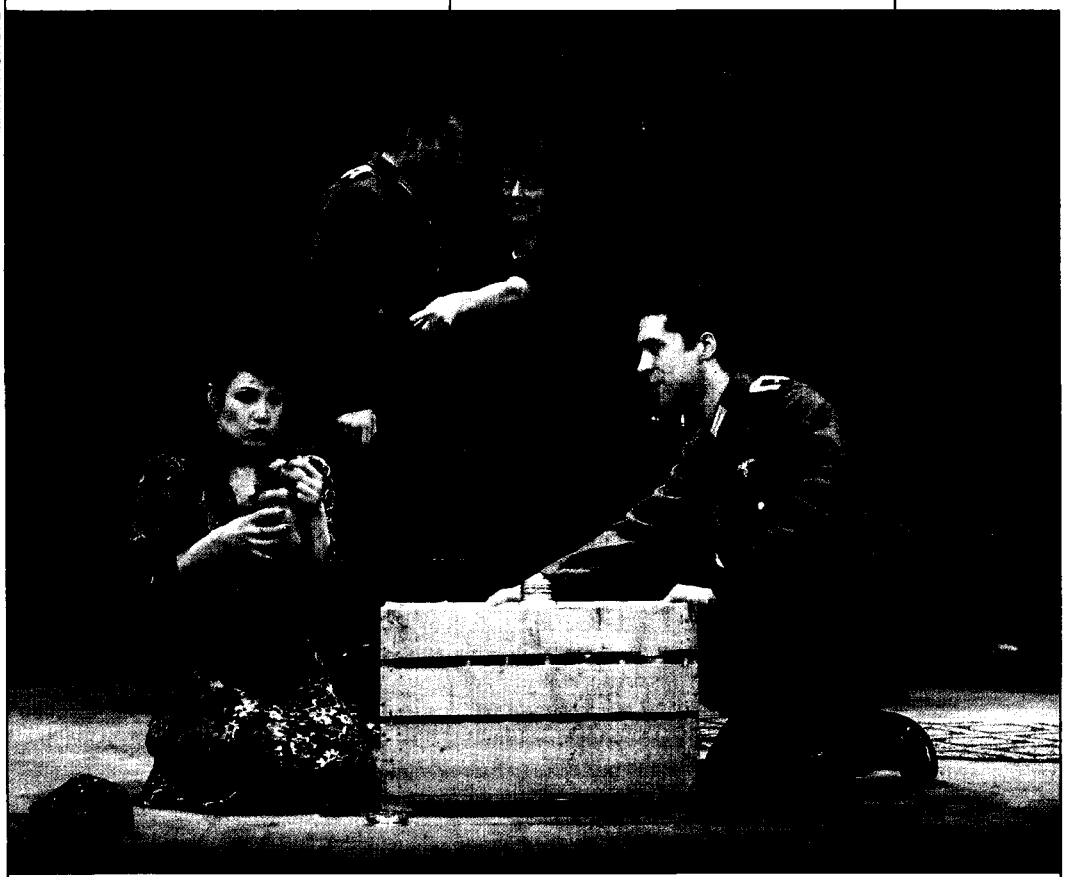
One of the great romances in Western history is the theater's love affair with itself. Since Aristophanes, the theater has been addicted to plays about how important, wonderful, and glamorous it is; and as the centuries have twirled along to our day, that reflexive love has embraced entertainers as well as actors. The latest "affair" is **Piaf**, a play by Pam Gems about the French singer who was in fact a genius of pop. *Piaf* is also one more of another curious breed, the show that asks a performer to perform like a famous star: Bessie Smith, Fats Waller, and the Marx Brothers are others who have lately had their impersonators on Broadway.

Pam Gems is English and has had one previous play produced here, off Broadway at the Manhattan Theater Club, *Dusa, Fish, Stas, and Vi*, which I thought fairly static. It meant to show the struggle for liberation of four young London women today, and three of them stayed the same throughout. *Piaf* is certainly not static; and show-biz adulation though it is, it too seems designed to show a woman's struggles in a world dominated by men. Its first trouble is that, as an example of a woman's struggle against male domination, Edith Piaf is a poor choice. She had gifts that would have made her outstanding in an Amazon society, and she was so active sexually that it's hard to think of her as being exploited sexually by males. True, early in life she was reputed to be a prostitute, a male-oriented trade, but there's no indication that she was much less promiscuous when she wasn't for hire.

The play's muzziness continues. *Piaf* was first done in London—by now almost a routine comment for serious plays on Broadway—the star is English, and the dialogue, which is gamy, is in Cockney to suggest the street argot of Paris. At first this seems even more apt for America because it makes the play sound foreign at the same time that it's comprehensible; but then Piaf sings most of her many songs in French, which leaves us with madly mixed conventions.

The script itself is a surfboard ride over a complex life: from the streets of a working-class quarter to cafes, then stardom and adulation and international tours and international friends, through husbands (several) and lovers (who's counting?), to a finish in drugs and disease at the age of 48 in 1963. (I read her biography some years ago and was especially struck by the fact that, even toward the end, racked and maimed, she drew young men both in

MARTHA SWOPE



From left: Zoë Wanamaker, Lewis Arlt, Jane Lapotaire, and Michael Ayr in Pam Gems's *Piaf*.

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sex and devotion.) Gems's play skims the story so synoptically that all the characters other than Piaf—and one lifelong pal, a woman who whored with her—are like props for the star. The play runs over two hours, but it has the texture of a skit.

Now even this effect, like the use of Cockney, might have turned out well: a play with the shape and speed of a cabaret skit about the life of a cabaret performer. This reinforcement of content by form seems intentional: The stage holds a large raked platform; behind it sit the three musicians who accompany and set moods; bits of furniture are placed and removed, with most of the "scene design" done by lighting; around the platform sit the actors who, other than Piaf and pal, all play many parts. Further to the cabaret mode, the director Howard Davies has paced the piece with egregious pizzazz and often has the actors play front. I don't merely mean they face front: They "take" front—they show their reactions, like vaudevillians, to an audience they know is watching. And the life-as-show feeling is heightened by the free-form neon light over the playing area that changes from red to blue at peak moments.

But this idea—mimesis of the story by the form of the play—is done so breathlessly fast that it never breathes: It's a whiz-past of mannequins. And two other troubles weaken it further. First, that star-imitation syndrome. Jane Lapotaire, the English actress who did the part in London and does it again here, knows that she's no Piaf and has said so, but disclaimers are no help. The play is built around a lot of Piaf's performing, and that performing has to be what everyone on stage says it is or the whole thing's down the drain. If Lapotaire were anything like as good a singer as Piaf, she wouldn't be playing Piaf, she would be Lapotaire. It's not a criticism of Lapotaire to say that she's not Piaf: But it was a mistake to center so much of the show on her singing. As for her acting, that made me a bit uneasy, too. Lapotaire, a scrawny little woman physically right for Piaf, commits herself to the role in a way that suggests immersion rather than acting, more an induced self-deception than imaginative recreation. It's the way Will Geer used to do Robert Frost or the way Liza Minnelli keeps trying to do her mother. There is no edge, no view of the part, which good actors give us at their most convincing. It's almost like watching a nut case instead of an actor. If Lapotaire had been playing a fictitious or nonfamous performer, there might have been more acting and less intoxication.

And then there's that theater self-love. A lot of the play, as it goes on, is about going on: how much every performance takes out of a real performer, how little the audience knows or cares. Why the hell should we care? It's a bit like the president of the United States complaining about the burdens of office after he has fought to get in. But in a quite different way, the audience does care. The Star's Ordeal, in itself sentimental self-aggrandizement, has become the great fake agon of our time, a way for the viewer to go through catharsis on the cheap, without any real self-roiling, with plentiful caressing of frustrations. (For two hours, you too, John or Mary Bloggs, can know what it feels like to be a star.)

The Star's Ordeal has become the great fake agon of our time.

But there's something deeper, more important, in *Piaf* that holds an audience. I'm not predicting its success, though it was one in London, only commenting on what I saw and felt when I was there. To explain, I go back a step.

Despite the Broadway box-office boom, there's much talk these days about the end of the theater, not the usual facile gloom (of which the theater has always been secretly proud because the gloom was always proved false), but the aesthetic finish lying ahead of it because of technology. A talented actor told me lately of advice from one of the most active theater figures in New York: Get prominent as fast as you can because in 10 years it will all be cable television and they'll want names. One of our few intelligent theater critics, Gordon Rogoff, has commented comparably on the theater's future after seeing preparations for a TV-tape of an opera—preparations far beyond any theater's means.

Saturnine though I am, I doubt the completeness of these predictions, and the *Piaf* production is one reason why. Its audience was getting something it liked and can't get elsewhere. I don't mean live actors: I've doubted the indispensability of "liveness" ever since I began to understand a bit about film. I mean intrinsic and inseparable theatrical form.

If you go to see *Lunch Hour*, the Jean Kerr bore now on Broadway, you sit in front of something—an awkwardly designed Long Island beach house with script and performance to match—that you'll be able to see again in a few years at your local movie house and a few years after that on your TV screen at home. The other media will require only a little adaptation, nothing fundamental: *Lunch Hour*, more or less as it is, can be done on stage or screen or TV. Not *Piaf*. It could exist only in a theater: with its bare platform, its continually flexed and unrealistic lighting, its actors waiting in view, changing clothes for different characters in view, its musicians waiting and playing in view. Now any experienced playgoer will recognize that all of this is highly unoriginal but will also see that it couldn't happen anywhere but in a theater. (The few exceptions—some of Fellini's films, for instance—*are* exceptions.)

The audience at *Piaf* likes the show's reliance on its imaginative collaboration. The challenges to imagination here are hardly deep or new: They are aimed at the center of a soft viewer's soft daring. But they couldn't be issued anywhere but in a theater; and they give the audience, unconsciously, some feeling of stretch, of adventure, of accomplishment. *Piaf* itself is only a failed tease of a play about a bawdy humane genius, but at least the production does move toward one aspect of the theater's uniqueness, the selfhood—under the smarmy self-love—that is possibly the theater's best life insurance. ■

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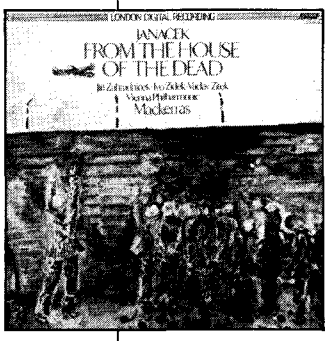
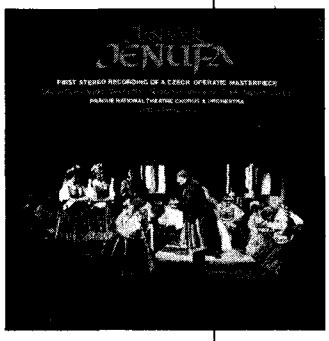
Stephen Wadsworth

Discovering Janáček's Operas

Several years ago I read, back to back, *Alive!*, the story of the Andes survivors, and *Watership Down*, a novel of rabbits holding their own in the open. I was struck by their bond as life-affirming tales of survival. In one week recently I heard recordings of Leŏs Janáček's operas **From the House of the Dead**, a shattering view of life in a prison camp, and **The Cunning Little Vixen**, whose theme—the blessed regeneration of nature—rises like the moon from simple scenes of a fox's living and dying. These operas, like those books so different in form and content, also celebrate life similarly.





Janáček (1854-1928), Moravian composer, conductor, teacher, student of the music of speech patterns and of the sounds of nature, was a humanist and an optimist who found in opera the form in which he could most richly express his deep love of life and people. Despite, or maybe because of the tragic deaths of both his children (aged 8 and 21) and an increasingly cold marriage, this man smiled radiantly at life, for all its frowns. Life went on, offering him new glories. In most of his operas, boundless happiness is achieved—even if fleetingly—only in the wake of death and dying.

Janáček's musical themes, based on the short phrases of Czech folk music and his own brusque dialect, are brief. His constant repetition and permutation of terse fragments of melody tease, even torture the ear. He lets you have a flood of lyricism but then brutally halts it with gnarled rhythmic twists and contrasting themes, pulling something vital out from under you. These flash floods give you the feeling that you can never quite grasp the truth or purity of an emotion for more than a few seconds—as in life. Too bad Janáček never went through with his thoughts of capturing Tolstoy's flighty, impulsive Anna Karenina in an opera.

He wrote nine operas, most of them available on Supraphon Records with seasoned casts of Czech singers. Many of these singers appear in London Records' unfolding series of Janáček operas—this one centered around a leading Janáčekian, Sir Charles Mackerras, who conducts the Vienna Philharmonic. Recently the operas have been staged in extensive cycles in Prague, Düsseldorf, Cardiff, and London, and at least five of them are repertoire pieces around the world. The New York City Opera performs *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropoulos Affair* this month. London Records, working backwards through Janáček's operas, has started with *Katya Kabanova*, *The Makropoulos Affair*, and now—digitally recorded—*From the House of the Dead*. Last month London taped *Vixen* with Lucia Popp, for release early next year.

I also worked backwards, from the last opera on the latest recording, *House* (2-London LDR 10036, $21.96)—following Janáček's ever keener and more eccentrically precise dramatic imagination back to its first flowering in **Jenůfa** (2-Angel, S-3756, $19.96). In *Jenůfa*, composed 1893-1903, the most widely produced of his operas, it is the revelation of her baby's murder that opens the heroine's eyes to a truer love and brighter future than she has ever known. Nowhere in Janáček is that feeling of *almost* grasping beauty and truth so viscerally, so disturbingly omnipresent. Supraphon, with whom Angel shares rights to this recording, has published in Europe a more recent recording of *Jenůfa* with the sensational Gabriela Benackova, whose rich, soft-grained voice is more smoothly produced than most Slavic sopranos'. That set probably will be released here within the year; meanwhile Angel's Czech cast is powerful.

So is London's on the new recording of *House*, composed 1927-1928, a dense but tuneful score clarified by the digital process. Here, cries of hurt, pain, delirium, and eventually death are juxtaposed with sarcastic, folksy reminiscences of crime. When a prisoner and a wounded eagle are freed at the end, the other prisoners can dream—but only for fleeting minutes before they are marched back to brutality and nothingness. Janáček's inscription? "In every creature a spark of God." In *Vixen* (2-Supraphon 112 1181-2, $19.96), composed 1924, Janáček "wedded my muse to the shadow of a forest and the miracle of dawn," and the result is erotic and moving. Bohumil Gregor's warm conducting draws exceptional performances out of only adequate singers. Supraphon provides no English translation, but Erik Chisholm's *The Operas of Janáček* (Pergamon Press, $9.75) offers detailed commentary. ■

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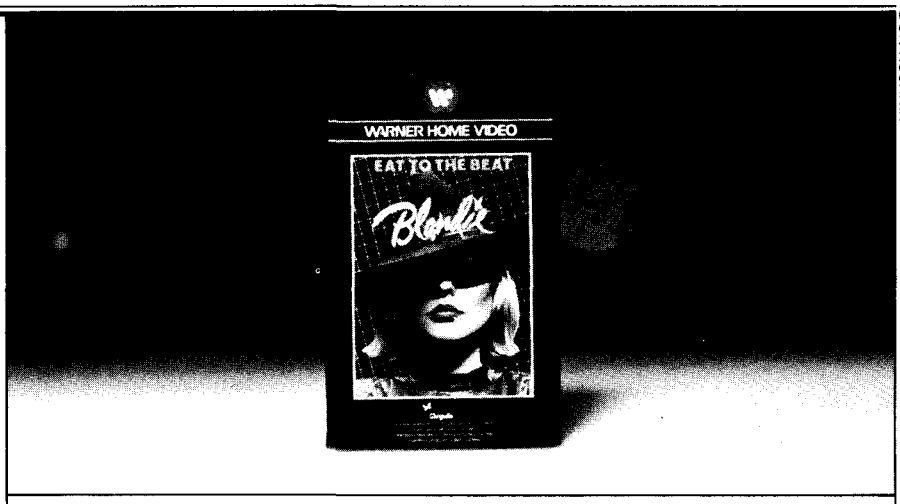
Peter Caranicas

The Challenge of Videodiscs



DON KUSHNIK

***Eat to the Beat* is the first major record album to be released in a video version.**

The music world is abuzz with speculation about the new video technology and how it will affect recorded music. It has even coined a new expression—"video music"—to designate some of the art forms that could develop from a fusion of the two media. As might be expected, rock music leads the way in market experimentation; but jazz, classical, and other genres are quickly following suit.

Fans of the semipunk rock group Blondie converged in droves upon record stores last year to buy its *Eat to the Beat* record album. Today, those who happen to own a videocassette recorder (VCR) can also go to their nearest video dealer and buy an *Eat to the Beat* videocassette containing the same songs as the audio album. It's the first release of a major record album in a video version. While the video album costs a lot more (about $60 compared to $8), it also offers the visual bonus of the group in concert, as well as trick shots, special video effects, and such visual surprises as footage of an H-bomb explosion, all set to the exuberant *Eat to the Beat* soundtrack.

Is the hefty extra expense worth it? Only for diehard Blondie fans, most of whom are too young to be able to afford a VCR. But 1981 will be remembered as the year of the videodisc's large-scale introduction. Prices may settle to $15 per disc program, or even less, as the costs of creating a videodisc are spread over millions of copies.

And selections aren't limited to rock. A small New York company, Improvising Artists Inc., has released several progressive jazz programs on videocassettes, with video special effects orchestrated to the music. Los Angeles video artist Ron Hays has created a number of spectacular, abstract visual accompaniments to the music of Richard Wagner. Rock-musician-turned-video-producer Todd Rundgren has woven a whimsical video program around Holst's *The Planets*. The MCA and RCA videodisc catalogs list ballet, modern dance, symphonic, and operatic performances.

A major obstacle to the growth of video music could be presented by the thorny issue of artist and union royalties and residuals. Assuming, however, these are overcome by negotiation, it may turn out that video music programs will be even more popular in the long run than feature films, the principal engine driving the emerging videocassette business today.

But before video music can develop, the manufacturers of video equipment and programs will have to pay greater attention to audio quality. None of the prerecorded cassettes on the market have stereo soundtracks, and the VCRs that play them are designed simply to be plugged into ordinary home TV sets, all of which have notoriously low-quality audio. The laser-optical videodisc system on the market today—sold by Magnavox and Pioneer—does have stereo capability, but most current videodiscs are available only with monaural sound. RCA's player, which uses a different technology and is now being introduced, has no stereo capability at all, although future models may incorporate that feature.

If video music ever becomes as significant a factor in the consumption of music as audio records, it will certainly have much impact on the popularity of artists and institutions. In popular music, visually appealing performers (Olivia Newton-John, Kiss) may be favored over the simple or visually dull (Phoebe Snow, Barry Manilow). In classical music, the introduction of video may benefit forms that demand visual attention—ballet, modern dance, opera—the same way the introduction of sound once drove motion pictures to new heights of popularity.

Whatever the outcome, video, like stereo before it, will place new demands both upon artists and technicians, all to the benefit of the consumer. ■

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SR Competition No. 19

At this writing many parts of this country are in the grip of a terrible drought. Desperate measures are being taken. There are more bricks in toilet tanks than in new home construction. Teenagers who used to shower monthly have cheerfully limited themselves to two baths a year. Handel's *Water Music* has been voluntarily removed from programs for the duration. We call upon all concerned *SR* readers, whether they live in the moist Carolinas or the dry Tortugas, to send us their drought relief plans. Unless the plan is very good, limit yourself to 100 words. A copy of Somerset Maugham's *The Rains Came* plus the usual $25 to our three winners.

Entries for Competition No. 19 must be received by May 1 and the winners will be announced in the July issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 19, *Saturday Review*, 150 East 58 Street, New York, New York 10155. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 16

One day when we were wondering whether we would ever be able to come up with another idea for a competition we hit upon the ultimate idea: a competition of competitions! And how beautifully you responded! So many great ideas flooded in that we shall probably be living for years, as the Russians say, on old fat (just a saying, nothing personal), which means that your suggestion, whether it wins today or not, might yet produce some modest income for you months hence. WATCH THIS SPACE! And now to our winners:

First prize to Fred Gurner of New York, before whose project reels the mind:

> This is it, kids! The ultimate anagram! Tear any page from the Manhattan Phone Directory and find a corresponding anagram, using all the letters of all the names on one side of the page. Cross out the side not used. As an example, we have found that page 584 of the 1980-81 directory (Gural to Gutierrez) can be anagrammatized into pages 136-137 of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (in the Penguin edition of Alan Russell's translation). Another is page 1359 (Tamler to Tannenbaum), which contains all the letters of Shakespeare's sonnets 36, 37, 38, 57, and 69. We almost had the name Tang Fung Kwan left over! Readers are warned not to tear pages out of public phone books. Besides being inconsiderate, this might tip your hand as to what pages you are working on. Out-of-towners use your own phone books. Duplicate prizes will not be awarded. Good luck!

Immediately on receiving this entry we made a quick check of the phone booths in our neighborhood and found *every single directory* missing! Not just pages—the whole thing. *Millions* of people must be working on this contest right now! No duplicate prizes, thank goodness. (Quick thinking, Gurner.) We are now looking for that page in Flaubert that contains a statistically quite improbable number of g's.

Second prize to Patrick H. Hodgkin of Culver, Indiana, for this attractive challenge:

> A short story by Graham Greene entitled "A Shocking Accident" hinges on the difficulty of accepting with appropriate sobriety a death caused by a falling pig. He explains the circumstances concisely: "Apparently in the poorer quarters of Naples they keep pigs on their balconies. This one was on the fifth floor. It had grown too fat. The balcony broke." Such a mishap must, we suppose, have been reported in the local press with as much deadpan as could be mustered. Readers are asked to describe this or some similarly ludicrous fatality (in English, not Italian) in fewer than 100 words. A copy of Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* plus the usual $25 to each of the three winners.

Third prize to Amy Briggs of St. Paul, Minnesota, who provided us with a malenky smeck (a small giggle; see below):

> "Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio; a veck of horrorshow chepookas, of zammechat messel, he sobiratted me a thousand razzes."
>
> If you blinked at that passage, so might Shakespeare have done. It is our own version in "Nadsat," the slang-language of teenage villains, invented by Anthony Burgess for his novel *A Clockwork Orange*.
>
> Lewis Carroll invented a few words, Burgess a language, and Tolkien a language with an entire world attached. All we ask you to do is come up with a couple of sentences. Name the speaker, the language, and send a translation. Winners will receive a copy of Webster's *New World Dictionary* to facilitate their re-entry into English. Have a horrorshow raz (good time)!

Well, that should at least sell a few dozen copies of our colleague Burgess's book.

Puzzles

Literary Crypt No. 164

WHEN BOTH WHT OLD EWDZ LEE PAQUWDUZN LYWAZ ZOT MAZAQT OLD WHT QTLPOTK ZOT LVT ZW BQUZT LH LAZWYUWVQLCON.

TSTENH BLAVO

Wit Twister No. 176

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

— — — — — — — — warnings tell where storms will pass.
An — — — — — — — — discovers seeping gas.
Yet one windbag blew in and gassed us all:
The — — — — — — — — of our new concert hall!

A.S.

Answers next issue

March Answers

Literary Crypt No. 163

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Francis Bacon

Wit Twister No. 175

Duse, Sued, Deus, dues, used

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 205

Ring Lardner: On Chain Letters

Outside of believing that it is bad luck to bet vs. the Yankees I ain't got no superstitions and will take this opportunity of warning my friends that I ain't going to be no party to a endless chain letter not even if it was started by Gen. Pershing.

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Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

1 W	■	2 Y	3 R	4 O	5 U	6 L	7 C	8 M	9 D	10 T	■	11 W	12 D	13 S	14 U	15 M	16 P
■	17 L	18 T	19 E	20 H	■	21 X	22 B	23 R	■	24 O	25 W	26 E	■	27 X	28 J	29 F	30 Q
31 G	32 Y	■	33 T	34 L	35 W	36 S	■	37 E	38 S	39 W	40 O	41 I	42 G	43 Q	44 R	■	45 D
46 J	47 Y	■	48 E	49 B	50 X	■	51 C	52 K	53 A	54 Y	■	55 J	56 I	57 D	58 O	59 Y	60 M
■	61 M	62 W	63 D	64 J	65 B	66 N	■	67 A	68 V	■	69 E	70 G	71 I	72 U	73 W	74 D	75 N
76 M	■	77 G	78 X	79 A	■	80 F	81 C	82 U	■	83 K	84 N	85 M	86 W	87 Q	■	88 C	89 G
90 I	91 N	92 W	■	93 Q	94 T	95 U	96 P	97 R	98 D	■	99 A	100 J	101 V	■	102 X	103 N	104 S
105 G	106 M	107 F	108 J	■	109 I	110 P	111 B	112 M	113 C	114 A	■	115 G	116 V	■	117 M	118 V	■
119 F	120 Y	121 M	122 P	123 U	124 C	125 Q	126 A	127 D	128 G	129 L	■	130 N	131 I	132 V	133 T	134 C	135 Y
136 M	137 X	■	138 K	139 G	140 D	141 Y	■	142 N	143 M	144 J	145 W	146 Q	■	147 N	148 X	■	149 Q
150 P	151 C	152 D	153 I	154 V	155 U	156 K	157 O	■	158 U	159 F	■	160 T	161 B	162 N	163 M	■	164 T
165 I	166 D	167 H	168 P	■	169 M	170 X	171 E	■	172 W	173 H	■	174 J	175 T	176 K	■	177 G	178 Y
179 D	180 F	181 J	182 N	183 T	184 H	185 M	186 X	187 R	188 Q	189 B	■	190 J	191 B	■	192 I	193 X	194 P
195 K	196 E	197 S	■	198 F	199 G	—	200 M	201 Q	202 U	203 H	204 W	205 T	206 N	207 L	■	■	■

Middleton Double - Crostic No. 206

CLUES	WORDS
A. Sp. Conquistador (1485–1547)	53 67 79 99 114 126
B. Cap. of Persia, 16th–18th cent.	161 189 191 22 49 65 111
C. Recommend publicly; attorney	113 134 7 51 81 88 124 151
D. Commonplace, mediocre (comp.)	152 166 179 12 45 63 98 127 57 74 9 140
E. Appropriate reward or punishment; abandons	171 196 19 26 37 48 69
F. Dejected, depressed (3 wds.)	80 107 119 159 180 29 198
G. Positive	199 77 89 105 128 177 31 70 115 42 139
H. Mess up, make a hash of	167 173 184 203 20
I. Rhizome	41 56 71 90 109 131 153 165 192
J. Not communicating (3 wds.)	46 64 108 144 181 174 190 28 55 100
K. Twist suddenly; tool	138 156 176 52 83 195
L. Teams	207 6 17 34 129
M. ERA, to Vida Blue, e.g. (3 wds.)	163 169 200 60 85 112 136 185 143 106 121 8 61 117 76 15

CLUES	WORDS
N. "He thought he saw a ___ / That questioned him in Greek" (Carroll, "Sylvie and Bruno")	84 103 147 162 66 91 130 75 182 142 206
O. Checks; arises	4 24 40 58 157
P. Formal (comp.)	16 96 122 168 194 110 150
Q. Unseemly behavior or character	125 146 30 43 93 149 188 201 87
R. Relinquishes, yields	97 187 44 3 23
S. Goof, saphead, chump	36 197 38 104 13
T. Gradually (3 wds.)	205 133 183 94 33 10 18 160 164 175
U. Propitious	155 14 72 158 123 5 95 202 82
V. Wicked	118 101 68 132 116 154
W. From gunwale to gunwale	1 11 25 145 86 92 172 35 204 62 73 39
X. Estate in *The Bride of Lammermoor*	186 193 102 50 170 27 21 78 148 137
Y. Long, trumpet-shaped glass for serving beer (comp.)	32 178 47 120 59 2 135 141 54

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Noted marine sculptor Jerry Glover created this favorite among fishermen in astonishingly life-like, precise ⅛ scale. Hand-painted on Resinwood. Body length: 7 inches.....$79.50

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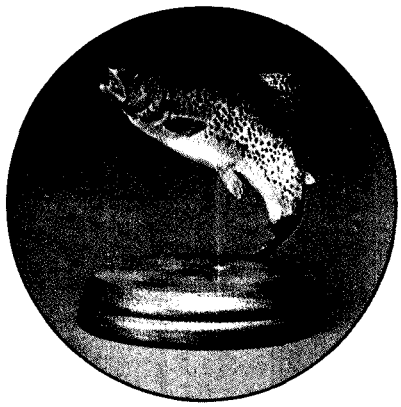

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SR RECOMMENDS

Books

Fiction

Ellis Island and Other Stories, by Mark Helprin (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 196 pp., $10.95). Any paragraph of Helprin's is an ideal example of the fluidity and resonance of his story-telling. Brilliant images sparkle throughout his tales about young men of various nationalities dreaming and undergoing dreamlike experiences as they come to terms with and continue to navigate the tortuous, confluent rivers of art and life. Helprin's stories are so artistically etched that reading them is like casting an eye along a row of breathtaking, perfect Steuben objects.

The White Hotel, by D.M. Thomas (The Viking Press, 288 pp., $12.95). This extraordinary novel creates Lisa Erdman, a fictitious patient of Sigmund Freud, together with her erotic journal, letters from various members of Freud's inner circle, and a thoroughly convincing analysis by Freud himself—followed by Lisa's later life, death, and apotheosis. That all this is transformed into a vision of hope is the triumph of its author, a poet of astounding talent.

Midnight's Children, by Salman Rushdie (Alfred A. Knopf, 442 pp., $13.95). With wry affection, author Salman Rushdie draws us into the kitchens and politics of an Indian family, and into the sexual struggles behind the *purdah*. Most gripping is the hero's transformation from baby, full of dreams, to adult, confused and empty, amid the disillusioning modern power struggles in his homeland. A memorable tale of family, superstition, love, belief cherished and lost that pleases the senses and the heart.

Nonfiction

George Orwell, by Bernard Crick (Atlantic Monthly/Little, Brown, 576 pp., $19.95). In writing *1984* George Orwell did for English-speaking people, if not for all children in European society, what John Bunyan did when he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*: He defined the world for us. Thirty years after his death, a biographer worthy of Orwell has written the story of his life. Loving and alive, admiring but not uncritical, well-focused on its subject but with enough background and supplementary information to make him intelligible, Bernard Crick's literary biography works and works well.

The Killing of Karen Silkwood, by Richard Rashke (Houghton Mifflin, 407 pp., $12.95). The night she died in a car accident in 1974, Karen Silkwood was on her way to meet a reporter with documents she said would prove that the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant where she worked was making defective plutonium rods. Though the documents were never found and the Oklahoma police said her death was accidental, Richard Rashke here presents new information to indicate that she was run off the road. Much of his book is devoted to events in the years since Silkwood's death and to an informative discussion of the issues surrounding nuclear energy. In places his argument is melodramatic, but he tells a frightening story.

Magda Goebbels: First Lady of the Third Reich, by Hans-Otto Meissner (Dial Press, 288 pp., $14.95). The true-life tragedy of Magda Goebbels, her martyred children, and her husband Joseph—Hitler's twisted, club-footed alter ego, Minister of Propaganda in the Third Reich, and supersatyr ruler of the German film industry—is heady stuff. Steady restraint and a hard rein on any urge to add high color to the dazzling ironies and horror give us a stately, measured, intimate picture of world monsters seen on human scale.

SR's Phoenix Code

- Outstanding
- Excellent
- Good
- Notable

Film

The Last Metro. François Truffaut's "cultural" melodrama about a theater troupe's survival in Paris during the Nazi occupation is an engrossing, frequently dazzling and uniquely satisfying entertainment, with Catherine Deneuve and Gerard Depardieu among its chief attractions.

Caddie. This Australian film biography of a suburban housewife who supported herself and her children working as a barmaid in Sydney during the Twenties and the Depression is given substance by Helen Morse as the valiant heroine and texture by Donald Crombie's direction, with period and place brought to glowing life.

Eyewitness. Written by Steve Tesich and directed by Peter Yates, this thriller offers an original, topical, and complex plot, with a wonderfully dense variety of New York City characters and locales. First-rate performances by William Hurt, Sigourney Weaver, et al.

Theater

The Pirates of Penzance (Uris Theater, New York City). Director Wilford Leach and music director William Elliott set an overall tone of intelligence and charm. This *Pirates* has been put together by contemporary Americans who love and respect the work but who will not try to mimic Victorian Englishmen or their descendants. Unapologetically starring pop singer Linda Ronstadt as Mabel.

The Elephant Man (Booth Theater, New York City). The play—not the movie. An innocent but monstrously disfigured man becomes a socially modish figure in Victorian London. The play satirizes antiquated morality (always an easy target), but its sense of humanity is honest and moving.

42nd Street (Winter Garden Theater, New York City). "Hear the beat/of dancing feet," says the title song, and

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never did a lyric fix a show's essence more neatly. Choreographed by the late Gower Champion on Thirties models, the brisk tappings carry us along on a pleasant tide of nostalgia. The show is chunks of agreeable stuff that makes us feel things were better back then.

Amadeus (Broadhurst Theater, New York City). Peter Shaffer's saga of the frustration and jealousy in Antonio Salieri (Ian McKellen), the once famous but mediocre Italian-born Viennese composer, over the success and genius of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. A potentially fertile idea, reduced with dramatic gimmicks. Even so, the production merits attention for a bumptious and endearing performance by Tim Curry as an irrepressible Mozart.

Records

C.P.E. Bach: Symphonies (Archiv 2533 449, $9.98 and L'Oiseau Lyre DSLO 557-8, $19.96). Carl Philipp Emanuel had the most distinctive voice of J.S. Bach's several composer sons, and in the six highly dramatic string symphonies of Wq 182 he was at his most adventurous and emotional. Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert play all six on one disc with featherlight but intense exactitude (Archiv), while Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Music, playing with grander line and broader accents, adding two symphonies for full orchestra, take up two discs (L'Oiseau Lyre). Both groups are superb.

Satie: Works for Piano (CBS M36694, $8.98). Hot on the heels of his fine recordings of Bach's Goldberg and Beethoven's Diabelli variations (2-CBS M2X 36925, $11.98) comes 28-year-old Daniel Varsano's exquisitely programmed and played Satie disc, 1980 winner of the Grand Prix du Disque. Moving from peaceful *Gymnopédies* to the arch, detached musical jokes of *Dessicated Embryos*, and back again, Varsano captures the romance of Satie's surrealism with clarity and elegance.

Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto (Deutsche Grammophon Digital 2532 001, $10.98). Two sensational violinists, one of them on the podium, put new faces on both the concerto and the Berlin Philharmonic, which is always glorious but often impersonally so under Herbert von Karajan. Gidon Kremer, the soloist, and Lorin Maazel, the conductor, share the qualities of intellectual (and technical) precision and driving musicality. Their performance fairly flies off the record.

Chausson: Concerto, Op. 21 (Telarc Digital DG-10046, $17.95). This sort of updated concerto grosso for six players is perhaps the finest and most profound of Chausson's fewer than 50 published works. Lorin Maazel and Israela Margalit (his wife), the superb, soulful violin and piano soloists, draw Chausson's tender threads through the eye of the needle, supported by the Cleveland Orchestra String Quartet. Telarc's sound and surfaces are pure, fully worth the steep price.

Strauss: Intermezzo (3-EMI IC 165-30 983/85, $29.94). The bickering couple and marital spats of this "bourgeois comedy with symphonic interludes" are based on the Strausses and their much-ado-about-nothing daily quarrels. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and especially soprano Lucia Popp are animated and *brilliante* as composer and wife. (Available from German News Company, 220 East 86 Street, New York, New York 10028.)

Art

Artists of Israel: 1920-1980 (The Jewish Museum, New York City). A major exhibition of 124 paintings, drawings, and sculptures by 36 of Israel's most renowned artists, including Yaacov Agam, Avigdor Arikha, Pinchas Cohen Gan, and Benni Efrat. (Through May 16.)

California Billboards (locations throughout New York City). Pop learned from commercial art. Now commercial art is taking lessons from Pop. Seven billboards by California artists will be appearing by New York City roads throughout the spring. For information about times and places call Fashion Moda (212) 585-0135.

Television

Antony and Cleopatra. Jane Lapotaire, currently on Broadway in *Piaf* (reviewed in this issue), excels in Jonathan Miller's provocative production for PBS's *The Shakespeare Plays*. In his version, "this enchanting queen" is not a light-headed temptress but a wily, quick-witted match for her mate. As Antony, Colin Blakely effectively complements Lapotaire's performance. (April 20.)

Dance

American Ballet Theatre (Metropolitan Opera House, New York City). Directed by Mikhail Baryshnikov, this eight-week season features 11 new productions plus four full-length ballets and 15 regular repertory one-act ballets. Among the works, new and old, being added to the repertory are Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun*, Paul Taylor's *Airs*, George Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son* and *La Sonnambula*. (Opening April 20).

Men Dancing (Theater of the Riverside Church, New York City). Two separate programs featuring the following choreographers and their associates: Manuel Alum, Remy Charlip, James Cunningham, Andrew de Groat, Kenneth King, Don Redlich, Robert Small. (April 7 through 12.)

Kei Takei's Moving Earth (Larry Richardson's Dance Gallery, New York City). Kei Takei's *Light*, an extended dance work in 15 parts will be given in its entirety for the first time this month, with parts of the epic given on the first five days starting at 8 in the evening, and the total piece starting at noon on the last day and continuing through the night, with time out for a dinner break. (April 21 through 26.)

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